

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

To Members of the External Affairs Committee:

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

The next meeting of Frome Town Council's

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 17 December 2014, 7pm
Saxonvale Centre, Garsdale, Frome. BA11 1RZ

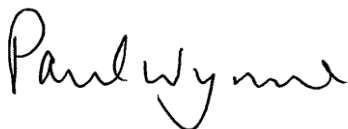
Please contact Ali Reid in advance of the meeting if you are unable to attend

AGENDA

This agenda refers to many green spaces and other locations in the town.
A map showing these will be available at the meeting.

1. Questions, comments and information from the public
2. Short talks from Kevin Lake, Mendip Care and Repair
3. Apologies for absence, declaration of members' interests and minutes from the last meeting on 22 October 2014
4. Outstanding actions and forthcoming items
5. To decide whether to support a Share and Repair Shop in Frome
6. A review of the Open Spaces Strategy and consider acquisition of Tower View ply area
7. To consider whether to approach MDC to acquire land at Packsaddle.
8. To consider contributing to Save our Sites Frome campaign to purchase fields at Whatcombe.
9. An update on projects the Community Projects Officer is working on at present.
10. An update on projects the Energy and Recycling Officer is working on at present.
11. An update on the Market Place redevelopment project.
12. To agree to progress on the project to improve Station Approach
13. To review proposals for a Car Park Strategy and consider specific proposals improvement to the Market Yard.
14. Work programme, organisation chart, budget and precept demand for 2015/16
15. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 25 February 2015, Assembly Rooms

Yours sincerely



Paul Wynne, Town Clerk, Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome, BA11 1DS
10 December 2014

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AGENDA

1. Questions and comments from the public
2. Short talk from Kevin Lake, Mendip Care and Repair
3.
 - 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 22 October 2014
4. Outstanding actions and forthcoming items – see appendix 1
5. **For Decision – Setting up Frome’s Share and Repair Shop**
Author: Anna Francis, Energy and Recycling Officer

Summary

Reducing waste and increasing equality are key strategic aims of Frome Town Council. An opportunity has come up for Frome Town Council to set up a Share and Repair shop in the centre of the town which addresses both of these issues. The empty shop on the Bridge is available for a charity to use free of rent and rates for three years. This would be a potential partnership project with Fair Frome, Edventure and Men’s Sheds.

The Share and Repair shop offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate Frome Town Council’s commitment to re-use, local resilience and equity. It will be a practical demonstration of partnership working and an opportunity to mobilise the community to work towards our ambitions of becoming a One Planet Community.

Background

There is a well-established network of sharing shops in Germany.¹ These shops enable local residents to borrow a wide range of items; from tools to gardening equipment to camping gear. As the average electric drill is used for 15 minutes during its lifetime (and produces around 45 kg of carbon in its production), sharing tools helps to reduce both carbon and waste. At the same time Fair Frome has found that lack of access to equipment can be a key barrier for local families.

The shop will also offer regular repair sessions in partnership with Men’s Sheds and promote and host skill shares – from food growing, to cooking with left-overs to DIY to lift-share to switching energy supplier.

In parallel we are preparing a business plan to set up a Re-Use centre at a unit near the Recycling Centre on the Marston trading estate. The shop will provide a central promotional point for the Re-use Centre.

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/17/berlin-borrowing-shop-benefits-share-leila>

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The proposal is to set up the project, utilising £7000 of the Energy and Recycling budget. Additional funding will be secured from Heart of Wessex Local Action Group. FTC will employ a part-time manager (on a fixed 6 month contract) and will work with Adventure whose team of apprentices could set up the shop and explore ways to ensure the shop is set up sustainably, including a 'Festival of Sharing'. Local networks, such as Sustainable Frome (who have 500 members) will be used to provide volunteers to run the shop. This would be a short term project of six months, by which time the project will be set up to sustain itself.

The lease has to be signed by a charity, so we hope to work with Fair Frome on this. The lease also gives the occupiers 28 days' notice if a paying tenant is found (and vice versa, if we wanted to wind the project up). However, standard practice is at least three months' notice. The shop has been empty for almost a year and 70% of the letting agent's charitable tenants who have free leases on similar properties remain in their free premises for 3 years or more.

Proposed Budget

Item	FTC	External Funder
Branding and promotional material	£800	
Decoration and refurb	£1000	
Shop manager	£4000	
Adventure apprentices including associated costs		£7051
Insurance and utilities	£1200	
Total	£7000	£7051

Recommendation

Part-fund the start-up of the shop and project manages it for six months until it is set up sustainably.

6. For decision: To re-adopt reviewed Open Spaces Strategy

Author: Ruth Knagg, Community Projects Officer

The strategy has been updated as a result of the detailed work undertaken by Bob Sargent this year for Save Open Spaces Frome. Bob presented his findings to Council at its last meeting. A few new sites have been inserted as a result. For example, Rodden Lake Stream Meadow and Rossiter's Hill/Lower Keyford. Bob's report used criteria for prioritising sites for protection and this has been used to show the open spaces in priority order in Appendix 2. Other updates in the final column have been informed by the work undertaken this year.

Residents in the vicinity of the play park at Tower View have been informed recently that this site might be under threat from development. It is not known whether this is true but given that it is a priority site in the Open Spaces Strategy to protect for the community, it is proposed to approach MDC to acquire the freehold of the site, and an

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appropriate dowry and then work with the local community to support improvements to it.

Recommendation

1. Adopt the revised Open Spaces Strategy.
2. Propose to MDC the freehold transfer of the open space Tower View along with an appropriate dowry.

7. For decision: Approach MDC to purchase freehold of two pieces of land at Packsaddle

Author: Cllr Boyden

Summary

This report proposes to work with local people and MDC in order to acquire the freehold of two open green spaces at Packsaddle Way and Chapman's Close. A map will be available at the meeting in order to locate these sites.

Background

For several years, the small open space and park on the corner of Pedlars Grove and Packsaddle Way, which I will call 'Packsaddle Park', was allowed to run down by Mendip District Council (MDC). Playground facilities were removed when they became worn out or broken and were not replaced. This left only two toddler rockers and a swing, with little to do and nowhere to sit and admire the great views of countryside around Frome. The open space at Chapman's Close is also in need of attention, there being a hard court with a basketball hoop, and a grassed area, but where ball games are restricted by proximity to the neighbouring residents.

I have been impressed by the 'community building' work of Jane Bennett and the rest of the Packsaddle Community Group in their work since 2012 based on the idea of using and enhancing the open spaces for the whole community. The Community Group have organised a number of community events and parties, play sessions with the Wansdyke Play Association, and community consultations which asked residents how they want to improve the area.

I understand the most popular things people want to see at the Packsaddle Park were more seating, some new play equipment, a circular cycle path, and a boules pitch, i.e. not just more children's play equipment. I was also pleased to be able to help the Community Group by setting up meetings and discussions with MDC officers.

In 2013, the Community Group applied successfully for funding from Frome Town Council towards the cost of seating and a boules pitch at Packsaddle Park. It turned some tree trunks into new seating, which were relocated away from the nearest neighbours in spring 2014 to avoid further nuisance and which are now happily found at the other side of the park. Picnic benches, including with disabled access, were installed by MDC and funded by the Community Group and FTC.

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In 2011 and 2012 Frome Town Council adopted its Open Space Strategy and Action Plan. This identified Packsaddle Park as needing improvements to facilities, and as a possible site for FTC acquisition. In 2013, Frome Town Council applied to take over Packsaddle Park and Chapman's Close open space, as well as other areas in Frome, but Mendip rejected the bid while it was waiting to approve the update to the Play Strategy.

When the Strategy was approved, this did not identify Packsaddle Park as a priority to invest in, and proposed a 'significant rethink' of the Chapmans Close court due to its location. MDC's Play Strategy, adopted in August 2013 after two sets of research, has not been implemented, largely due to a lack of staff resources.

Packsaddle Community Group have been in discussion with MDC officers for several months to try and progress a new boules pitch, some new swings, tree planting, and a cycle path around the perimeter of the park. The trees have been planted recently. Progress on the other facilities has been slow however, partly due to a lack of staff resources and other priorities, as this park is not a strategic priority for MDC.

But it is a priority for residents to improve community life in that area by having more of a park to go to.

If MDC remain as owners, the long delays in progressing discussions and improvements are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

FTC have worked very well with local residents and local groups on improving Welshmill Park and planning improvements at The Dippy, and the old Showfield, for the whole community. FTC is best placed, as the most local council with a proactive policy of community engagement with local residents and voluntary groups, to prioritise and implement improvements to local parks and open spaces that are important to local residents.

I have discussed informally with MDC's Strategic Assets Manager and Assets Maintenance Officer, the possibility of a transfer of the Packsaddle Park site to FTC. Their feedback has been positive, and officers agreed to consider an application for transfer and to present it for approval by MDC's Corporate Assets Management Group (CAMG) and Cabinet. I do not predict any objections from MDC to the transfer. No discussion has been had regarding a dowry as yet.

The Chapmans Close play area, with its hard court and basketball hoop, could also be a much better place to play, although is constrained by the neighbouring residential properties. While community plans for this area are not developed it seems logical to request that this site be transferred along with the Packsaddle Way site.

Recommendation

1. Propose to MDC the freehold transfer and an appropriate dowry of the open spaces at Packsaddle Way/Pedlars Grove and Chapman's Close in order to

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progress the Open Spaces Strategy and help realise the local community's ambitions for their area.

2. Work with the community including Packsaddle Community Group and neighbouring residents on plans to improve the open spaces.

8. For Decision – To consider whether to invest £35,000 in SOS Frome's campaign to save fields at Whatcombe for the community.

Author: Paul Wynne, Town Clerk

Save Whatcombe Fields campaign

The Community Projects Officer is a key member of Save Open Spaces Frome but undertakes this work outside paid FTC hours. As a result this report has been written by the Town Clerk.

SOS Frome have now opened their community share offer and to date pledges in excess of £80,000 have been received. SOS Frome hopes that FTC will make a contribution towards this acquisition by making an investment in the scheme of £35,000 in order to help the community save these beautiful and popular fields on the edge of town for future generations. The way that SOS Frome has been constituted and the way in which is proposing to purchase the fields at Whatcombe mean that the land will be prevented from future sale by an asset lock now that SOS Frome is a formal Community Benefit Society.

Each person or organisation who purchases shares has one vote at annual meetings, regardless of how many shares they own. If a shareholder wanted to withdraw, someone else would have to be willing to buy their share.

If EAC felt this was a project to support and one that FTC should support, EAC would need to recommend it to Council. Council has to agree these types of financial decisions. The £35,000 would come from reserves and a full cost implications could be tabled at Council on 7 January.

Recommendation

Recommend to Council on 7 January that FTC contributes £35,000 to SOS Frome in order to acquire land at Whatcombe Fields.

9. For information – Tabular update on community projects

Author: Ruth Knagg, Community Projects Officer

Area	Task	Status
Rodden Meadow	Two new benches – carved with poetry	Two winners announced. Carving to be done & benches in place by February 2015.
Victoria Park	Multi Use Games Area	Under construction and will be complete by Christmas

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	Tennis Courts replacement	Funding in place, full plans drafted for comment. To be completed by April 2016.
Dippy	Management plan	Community group plans discussed with NVB to formalise and advise on access improvement
River Corridor	Henley Way to Welshmill	Network Rail holding up the final phase of new path under the bridge. Awaiting their clearance
	Community Garden alongside new path above	Edventure underway with their project to construct a round house and create tranquil green space
Welshmill	Pump Track	To be re-surfaced prior to a Pump Jam event spring 2015
Whatcombe Fields	Community purchase by Save Open Spaces (not FTC)	Shares and donations are now being sought by SOS Frome. FTC asked to support/invest
Community Grants	Final round of 2014/15 closes Jan 23 rd 2015	Wide promotion of grants scheme, including Youth Bank

10. For information - Tabular update on Energy and Recycling Projects

Author: Anna Francis, Energy and Recycling Officer

Energy and Recycling Officer Update to December 2014	To be completed by	FTC Budget
<p>Transport:</p> <p>Car Club: funding secured (£16,225), for three vehicles (two electric, one hybrid)</p> <p>Cycling: Secured funding for Dr Bike sessions and cycle confidence classes. Sessions will re-launch in Spring 2015</p> <p>Electric Charging points: three free electric car charging points secured for Cheese and Grain and community hub (to follow).</p> <p>Sustainable transport programme: Helped secure £30k Section 106 money for signage and wider pavement at train station.</p> <p>Facilitating Frome and Villages Bus User Group, including Somerset consultation outreach and research into usage</p>	<p>Launch in January 2015</p> <p>July 2015</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Waste:</p> <p>Share and Repair – identified free unit to set up community shop in partnership with Edventure</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>£7000</p>

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Re-Use Centre – applying for funding to set up Re-Use centre at Marston Trading Estate. Supporting Instrument Recycling, Toy Library and Scrapstore projects.	Applying in Jan 2015	
Protomax: organised VHS amnesty to recycle videos into planters and benches for Frome.	December 2014	
Linking with Biozolve to recycle green waste into biomass pellets.		
<p>Energy: Energy volunteers are running monthly sessions at the Medical Practice. Launching thermal imaging programme in January – participants will pay towards costs but will be eligible for free insulation and draught-proofing materials With CSE we are targeting households to ensure Frome homes benefit from the new government funding for solid wall insulation</p> <p>Schools: launched Carbon Countdown with Frome College, Oakfield and Selwood Academies aiming for 10-20% carbon reduction.</p> <p>Solar: Frome Renewable Energy Co-op will launch their first solar projects and community share issue soon.</p> <p>Secured £30,000 for new solar-powered stand at Frome Football Club</p> <p>Awarded ‘Most proactive public body’ in South West Green Energy Awards</p>	<p>Winter 2014</p> <p>Summer 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p> <p>November 2014</p>	£800
<p>Future Activities: Developing a One Planet Business programme to offer energy and waste audits to local businesses Developing a One Planet strategy and FTC policies in line with the Neighbourhood Plan Further developing the sustainable transport programme to enhance public transport services Exploring renewable energy opportunities including hydro</p>		

11. For Information – Market Place Improvements Phase 1 and 2

Author – Town Centre Regeneration Manager

Phase 1

Summary

The detailed design and consents for the improvements around the Boyle Cross are proceeding towards implementation – this paper updates members on progress.

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Background

Phase 1 of the market place improvements concerns the resurfacing of the area around the Boyle Cross and the reinstatement of the fountain. These proposals result from the 2008 Vision for Frome exercise and the 2012 feasibility study undertaken by Landscape Projects. The phase 1 works, which do not involve work on the vehicle carriageway itself, are a necessary pre-cursor to phase 2 which will see traffic calming and improved pedestrian crossing facilities.

Design

IMA were appointed in March to undertake detailed design of the scheme based on Landscape Project's feasibility study. The initial brief to IMA simply called for the Landscape Projects Scheme to be detailed such that planning permission could be applied for and contracts to construct the works let.

During the consultation process for planning consent it became apparent that there were concerns over the location of benches and other street furniture near the fountain: these concerns related to the effect on the setting of the fountain rather than the benches or furniture per se. A meeting was held on site between the Town Council, IMA and Mendip's Conservation Officer.

As a result, an alternative scheme was drafted which moved the benches to the upper end of the site, where they also form a wall allowing a change of level with no obvious step. Once this principle was established, the scheme then had two variants, one sticking to the present levels and simply resurfacing the site, one with two shallow steps just downhill of the cross wrapping round on the highway side (the existing footway remaining graded rather than stepped). After consultation with Mendip Market Manager and Operations Manager, and with other groups including those representing those with mobility problems, it has been decided to pursue the stepped scheme. This results in the area created being less steep, making it easier to use for events and crowds.

Illustrative 3D representations of the preferred scheme is at appendix 3.

Planning

Now that the preferred scheme has been chosen, the planning application has been resubmitted. A six week consultation period on the amended plan will be required and we are awaiting confirmation of the date for determination.

Parking

The scheme results in the loss of 11 parking spaces in Market Place. These spaces are time restricted to one hour maximum but are free of charge. We have made a proposal to Mendip to replace this free, time restricted provision in Bridge Street, where spaces are currently available on a pay and display basis.

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Land Transfer

For reasons of management once the works are complete it is felt to be preferable for the site to be owned by Frome Town Council, which requires a transfer from the current owners Mendip District Council. Progressing this has been delayed pending notification of the final design but the matter is now due to be considered at CAMG in January.

Budget and timescale

The overall budget available for these works including design fees and contract supervision is £300,000, of which £9,000 was spent last financial year.

The works on site are forecast to take 8 weeks, but cannot be commenced until planning consent has been granted, arrangements for alternative parking are in place and land transfer agreed.

An invitation to tender for the works was advertised in August, and contractors have pre-qualified. These contractors will shortly be asked to bid for the works.

An update on progress will be brought to EAC in February.

Phase 2

Summary

As Phase 1 moves towards completion, consideration is needed as to developing phase 2 which will build on the current scheme to enhance pedestrian safety and amenity in Market Place

Background

Phase 2 of the Market Place builds on phase 1 and allows further works to be undertaken in the carriageway of the B3090 and King Street. The scope of works devised in the 2012 Landscape Projects Report focusses on environmental improvement, reduced traffic speed and increased ease of crossing for pedestrians.

The proposed works in that report run from North Parade to the junction of Bath Street with Christchurch Street. In practice the works identified beyond phase 1 need not be delivered as a single scheme and can be implemented in phases as capacity and budgets permit. The most important next step is to improve safety for pedestrians and to increase crossing opportunities in the Market Place. To achieve this it will be necessary to reduce the impact of traffic upon the street scene here.

Design

In order to keep momentum on the scheme, IMA have been asked to proceed detailed design of Phase 2 now that the critical details of phase 1 have been determined. Phase 1 has been designed to have regard for the design and implementation of phase 2 alongside. Examples of how this has been incorporated include regarding the upper end of the site to facilitate pedestrians crossing, and kerb heights allowing for later building up of the carriageway as part of raised tables for traffic calming.

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The particular emphasis of phase 2 at present is traffic calming and improvement to the safety of crossing the road in the vicinity of the entrance to Stony Street. This is a natural desire line and, with regard to visibility, one of the safest places to cross the road.

Budget and timescale

At the moment the proposals are being tailored to a budget of £150,000. However, IMA and the Council are working on the basis of there being more than one phase subsequent to phase 1, and if the budget increases then additional works can be brought forward.

Further details of phase 2 will be brought to EAC in February.

Phase 2 will follow phase 1 within six months subject to highway permissions

12. For Decision – Improvements to Station Approach

Author – Town Centre Regeneration Manager

Summary

There has been a long standing aspiration to achieve improvements to the station area, including but not limited to environmental improvements on the station approach.

The unexpected availability of some s106 budget provides an opportunity to commence improvements at the station and thus provide an impetus to seek further funds and further improvements. The proposed scheme fulfils the requirements of the available funding.

Background

The area around Frome Station has suffered through an ad hoc approach to the area for many years. The area is not neglected as such but the site is uncoordinated and makes little reference to its principal function in serving rail passengers, to the extent that this sometimes seems to be subservient to other needs even being a drop off point for local schools. The station itself, a listed building and the last remaining wooden Brunel passenger shed is important for its own sake.

In August this year the Town Council's attention was drawn to a sum of £30,000 that had been paid as a S106 contribution from the Coloroll site. The payment had been made in 2005 and as a result has to be spent by 31 March 2015 or returned to the developer. A discussion with Somerset County Council has gained their approval for the Town Council to implement a scheme within the approved purposes of the S106 funding.

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Aspirations

Aside from the environment of the Station Approach, the station is poorly served and poorly linked to the town by virtue of a lack of signage, facilities and public transport. The station is in practice only ten minutes' walk from the Town Centre but there is no signage for the most appropriate route. The only visible signs for pedestrians near the station send them via Rodden Meadow, which is very attractive as a walk but nearly four times as far.

Pedestrian facilities to the station itself are poor, the footpaths are crossed by multiple access points, that on the town centre side is narrow and there have been recent improvements on Portway with the installation of a second footway under the railway bridge.

There is also no bus service serving the station: Frome Minibuses service to Warminster calls nearby on Portway, but the "Bus Stop" on the forecourt is only used by rail replacement bus services.

In addition cycle facilities at the station are limited and the cycle route to the town centre is only possible to find if you know where it is.

The aspiration therefore is to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities and linkages to the station and to facilitate an improved bus service linking the station to the town and if possible the station to Westbury mainline Station.

Design

With the deadline for spending the S106 funding fast approaching, IMA have been asked to look at proposals that would fulfil the County's requirements and begin to approach our own aspirations. IMA have prepared a scheme that would deliver the following:

- Pedestrian and cycle signage between the station, the Town Centre and other destinations
- A widened footway on the west (town centre) side of the Station Approach
- A fully disabled accessible bus stop on the approach in readiness for a bus service (discussions are ongoing with First to provide such a service)
- A safe and accessible route across the forecourt – it should be noted that for much of the time pedestrians can take any route they wish as traffic levels are very low indeed. However, the route marked will be entirely wheelchair accessible and minimise the "at risk" time in the carriageway for those walking slowly.
- Cycle racks
- Taxi Rank

The preferred scheme is at appendix 4.

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The works are at a level that competitive quotes will be required. This process, the necessary permissions and the capital works could be completed in total in 8-10 weeks.

Recommendations

1. Approve the scheme at appendix 4
2. Secure quotes, permissions and commission the necessary works
3. Report back to EAC at the next meeting in February with an update.

13. For Information – Car Park Strategy and the Market Yard Car Park and Cultural Quarter

Author – Town Centre Regeneration Manager

Car Park Strategy

Summary

The town council is developing a strategy for parking within the town centre as part of an overall review of transport needs to serve the town and its surrounding parishes. This report summarises the objectives and actions to determine and deliver a strategy for the town

Background

The town council is seeking to develop a car parking strategy for the town as a whole and the town centre in particular. The parking strategy aims to ensure a balanced mix of parking in the Town Centre to meet the needs of residents, commuters, businesses and visitors. This will involve not only the provision of a range of high quality, accessible, safe, secure and well maintained on and off street parking but also the enforcement of the rules controlling where parking should take place to support the needs of:

- people with disabilities
- pedestrians
- cyclists
- public transport users
- freight
- motorists

It is necessary to ensure that the parking provision in the town is appropriate to meet the needs of different groups and areas of the Town Centre whilst still being sustainable, financially viable and supporting regeneration plans for the Town Centre.

The strategy would guide parking provision by location, permitted duration and tariff.

Vision

We are seeking to develop a strategy to ensure that parking provision in the Town Centre supports and improves the economic vitality of Frome including supporting regeneration and the quality of life for residents of Frome

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Link to other policies

This Strategy would work alongside the following legislation and Council Policies:

- Traffic Management Act 2004
- Mendip Local Plan, Frome Neighbourhood Plan and related documents.
- Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport)
- Somerset Future Transport Plan
- Somerset Parking Strategy
- Somerset Freight Strategy

Issues – Existing Provision and Aspirations

The town centre car parks serve four key attractors:

- Retail
- Commercial area
- Public Services
- Leisure and tourism.

The Council supports sustainable travel to the town centre, however, it does recognise that the town centre comes with specific parking needs:–

- a. Retail – The current retail offer provides a demand for parking but redevelopment of areas of the town centre for retail will come with a further desire/need to reconfigure existing car parking, both private and council owned, as well as increased car parking where increased retail capacity has been created.
- b. Commercial / Business – Current businesses in the town centre generate a demand for parking and the introduction of new business into the town centre will increase pressure on the current parking provision. This will especially be the case where businesses rely on being able to encourage customers to visit their premises or the ability to travel readily to other sites for business purposes as these journeys may be impractical by sustainable transport. Commuters are encouraged to use more sustainable transport modes to travel to work.

Transport Hubs

The Railway Station is a short distance from the town centre and generates its own demand for parking, which is only partly catered for by Network Rail and First Great Western. It is desired that a cycle centre is included within such additional provision and that it also provides for cars to be left overnight and for more than one day.

Buses – The town centre bus stop also serves as a coach stop and generates a need for some parking. Both the bus stops and rail station need facilities for private hire and taxis.

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Leisure and Tourism – The town centre has a growing number of leisure and tourist attractions and supporting restaurants which need parking provisions during the day, evenings and weekends. This provision needs to feel safe and secure to support the evening economy in the town centre.

Coaches and Taxis will also be an important part of delivering transport for leisure and tourism.

Town Centre Parking Provision and Aspirations

There are approximately 675 publicly owned off street spaces in the town centre, plus around 100 managed by Marks and Spencer, with a limited number of on street spaces in the centre itself and a much greater number in surrounding streets. Of the 775 off-street spaces, 740 are pay and display.

There are very few on-street parking spaces in the town centre area itself, and all of these are very time-restricted. In practice however on street parking in surrounding areas serves the town centre, especially for commuters and others wishing to spend all day in the town. There are marked spaces on Welsh Mill Road and unrestricted parking occurs in Welshmill Lane and other areas.

When the Saxonvale/Garsdale site is developed both the pattern of demand and the available supply of parking will alter.

Mendip own most of the off-road parking provision and Somerset as Highway Authority are responsible for on-street traffic orders and, by a contract arranged with the district, for enforcement of both on and off-street parking restrictions.

Discussion

The Town Council is at a very early stage in discussions with Mendip and Somerset over a parking strategy. In developing a parking strategy for the town it will be necessary to review existing usage to determine expressed demand for parking. Ticket data is available from Mendip but only covers pay and display parking and also only what motorists paid for not what they actually used, which is often less, and occasionally more, than the amount on the ticket. A review can also identify where illegal parking is occurring and thus assist in informing the enforcement elements of the strategy.

It will also be necessary to identify what the aspirations are for parking in terms of what needs to be provided to achieve wider objectives. This will be developed in consultation with businesses and town centre users. It is important to distinguish in this process between what the parking provision is (number of spaces and charge for them) and what the parking provision delivers (customers for town centre businesses for example).

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It is intended to develop the strategy over the first half of 2015, with parking surveys to be commissioned for February, avoiding half term week. The surveys are expected to cost no more than £3,000.

Conclusions

The council is only at the beginning of this process: Mendip have indicated a willingness to talk regarding changes to the parking regime in Frome on publicly owned spaces.

It is also important that the Town Council secures appropriate parking provision in any new developments within the town centre, most notably Saxonvale.

The Town Centre Regeneration Manager will report come back to EAC in May 2015 with proposals.

Market Yard improvements

Summary

With the location of the Market Yard Car Park between the town centre and key attractors including the Museum, Cheese and Grain and Black Swan Arts, consideration is being given to the role and form of this key car park and open space.

Background

Since the Market Yard car park was first laid out a number of changes have occurred around it and in Frome itself, amongst these being the successful establishment of the Black Swan Arts Centre, the refurbishment of the Cheese and Grain, and the inception and subsequent consolidation of the Independent Market on a number of Sunday's each year. In addition, events at the Cheese and Grain often occupy the area around it, and the twice weekly market uses part of the area.

There is also an increasing awareness of the benefits of open space within the centre, either on a permanent or periodic basis. The changes around the Boyle Cross will create a permanent space for markets and events, whilst the events in the Market Yard make periodic use of space that is used for parking much of the time.

Finally, the Market Yard car park is the meeting of a number of non-vehicular traffic routes, with NCR 24 arriving via the river bank from Welsh Mill and via Justice Lane from Wallbridge, the pedestrian route from the Town Centre reaching past the Library, and a pedestrian route from Delta Close and Whatcombe crossing Jensen Button Bridge.

All these separate factors indicate that the Market Yard Car Park has a potential additional role as a focal point.

Actions and conclusion

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At present an assessment is being undertaken of the baseline status of the car park, the landscaping within it, and the pedestrian and cycle routes across it. In view of the value of the car park as a parking facility in town any development of the area will need to be in conjunction with the Parking Strategy, and it is likely that the maximum capacity of the car park will need to be maintained for the foreseeable future, although part of that capacity could be used periodically for other purposes, as happens at present.

It is taken as read that a landscaping scheme for the car park will include better welcoming signage, more trees, fencing replaced as necessary and improved management of the riverbank.

A report will be prepared for EAC in February giving some landscaping options for the car park in the context of the emerging parking strategy for the town.

14. For Decision – Work programme, organisation chart, budget and precept demand for 2015/16

Authors: Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

Purpose of the report

Agree to recommend to Council on the 07 January 2015 the:

- a. Action Plan to 2016 at appendix 5
- b. Proposed organisational chart at appendix 6
- c. Budget and precept demand for 2015/16 at appendix 7

And note the Earmarked and General Reserve for 1 April 2015

Discussion

Action Plan to March 2016

The Strategy for Success Action Plan has been reviewed (see appendix 5) for the current financial year and updated for the period to March 2016.

Cllrs should note that the Action Plan excludes “business as usual” work such as maintenance of open spaces, financial responsibilities, planning and democratic services.

Included in the Action Plan are the budget code references so Cllrs can see what parts of the budget will be used to deliver specific parts of the Action Plan. As always this is a complicated process so we are happy to offer any further explanation in advance or on the night of the meeting.

We have explained in more detail below areas of the Action Plan where significant changes have occurred.

Community communication, engagement and volunteering.

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It is proposed to increase the focus on developing the way we communicate and engage with the community. This is a natural development for FTC following the successful Participate Frome initiative, our new websites and the expanded use of social media. The main areas of enhanced work are:

Informing the various communities in town about what is going on, where and when, using all forms of media (including social media, notice boards and events). The work will include what the Town Council and others are working on and will be mainly delivered via a series of projects focussed on creating a welcoming and knowledgeable environment at the Christchurch Street building. The underlying objective of this area of work is to create a greater sense of ownership, pride in the town and civic society.

Engaging with the community mainly by increasing volunteering opportunities in Frome for people of all ages by supporting organisations to increase their volunteer capacity. This will hopefully lead to the evolution of the third sector that is better equipped to deal with current and future needs of the community. We will provide a central point for volunteering enquiries at the Christchurch Street building. We also want to celebrate volunteering with various events through the year.

Support the work of community groups in the town to enable them to develop better organisational structure, better targeting of all types of grants and improved co-ordination and partnerships.

Combined, these interconnecting areas of work will be led by the Community Projects Officer post. At present this post is filled by two part time contract staff and we propose to recruit this post as soon as possible. The current year's salary budget has sufficient funds to do this. Once the Christchurch Street building is up and running the Marketing, Communications and Hub Manager will work closely with the CPO to provide technical communications expertise.

Continue to deliver the two core Green Space Strategies (Open Spaces and River Corridor).

This work area falls mainly in a new project to create a "Frome Green Spaces Network." This takes forward the concept of green infrastructure which is a strategic approach to managing existing and new green spaces and the corridors that link them for the benefit of the environment as well as the community. It supports the delivery of objective 2.2 of the Action Plan: "Making best use of the town's green spaces." A green infrastructure plan is also an action in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. While much of this work has already progressed well on the FTC estate, the extension to all green spaces in the town under one strategy is new.

This area of work will be led by the Environment Manager working with the newly renamed Green Space Community Projects Officer who will be returning from maternity leave on a part time basis in March. Both of these posts are shown on the organisation chart and appear in the Outside Services salary budget.

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Low carbon community

This work is being developed by the part time Energy and Recycling Officer and is a high priority in the Strategy for Success. It is proposed to expand this area of work to include working with local businesses and more work on sustainable/public transport. At the time of writing it seems best to provide an increased professional support / research budget (shown at 503/4719 on appendix 7) to allow the commissioning of projects although following further consideration it might be more appropriate to increase the hours of the p/t staff member instead.

The Energy and Recycling Officer will be line managed by the Economic Development and Regeneration Manager in future reflecting the enhanced work we want to achieve in this area by working with local businesses.

Town centre improvements

Securing improvements to the town centre is also a high priority in the Strategy for Success. Much of the work in progress relates to improvements to the Market Place, developing a landscaping and signage scheme for the Market Yard, improving the Station Approach and signage between the station and the town centre.

Until these projects are complete it is proposed to put a more resource towards forging better relationships with business and to establish a Town Centre Working Group (shown in central services salary budget 802/4001 on appendix 7). This Working Group will be a community/private/public partnership and will jointly agree and deliver priorities. A specific remit and time period for this group will be brought back to EAC in February.

The FTC organisation chart

This is largely unchanged from the current situation (appendix 6)

Cllrs should note that outside services will undergo a review once the Environment Manager is in post in late January. The budget has been set reflecting 2 FTE outside services operatives and a larger amount in the contracting budget to compensate. Four part time posts are vacant at the moment and we will not recruit anyone until the review is complete. The p/t Green Space CPO post is also illustrated in this team.

The additional town centre management duties are illustrated by noting that the Town Centre and Regeneration Manager post is now 1FTE, as discussed above.

The only other point to note is new post of Communications, Marketing and Hub Manager which has already been agreed as part of the Hub discussions over the past year. This post will be recruited in April 2015 so long as the acquisition is secure. It seems appropriate that the information centre assistants in the Library are also line managed by this post in future. The caretaker post will not be recruited until the building is up and running.

Proposed budget and precept

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A budget has been constructed (see appendix 7) and designed to deliver the Action Plan to March 2016. The proposed budget income and expenditure is detailed line by line with the net requirement for the precept proposed at £1,065,172. The budget codes have been cross referenced with the corresponding lines in the Action Plan to aid understanding.

Cllrs should note that £150,000 has been allocated to complete the phase 2a of the development of the Market Place (shown in the budget at 506/4125). Phase 1 is being funded from the EMR for Town Centre Improvements (9020 in the table on the next page). We have also inserted an estimated income of £150,000 from the sale of the Palmer Street office (shown in the budget at 802/1016). This should not be considered as anything other than an estimate at this stage and it will not be put on to the market until FTC is sure of the purchase of the building on Christchurch Street. We will refine this figure with local estate agents in January to help budget planning.

Cllrs should note that the proposed increase in precept enables this Council to set Frome's Portion of Band D Council Tax at an annual payment of £130.41, an increase of £7p per week. This calculation is based on a revised proposed MDC council tax base.

Date	Precept	MDC Tax Base	FTC's portion of Band D Council Tax per annum	FTC's portion of Band D Council Tax per month	FTC's portion of Band D Council Tax per week
2014/15	£1,022,787	8073.73	£126.68	£10.56	£2.44
2015/16	£1,065,172	8167.71	£130.41	£10.87	£2.51
Difference	£42,385	93.98	+ £3.73 pa	+ 31p / month	+ 7p / week

Of course, Council can reduce the work to be done in the Action Plan and reduce the budget and precept demand accordingly. However, the Council's Strategy for Success and the associated Action Plan to March 2016 will not be completed if this decision is taken. The recommendation, therefore, is to set the precept demand as proposed.

At the time of writing it is not known whether there will be a grant from government via the District Council to offset the impact on Council Tax payers resulting from changes in Council Tax Benefit. Cllrs will recall that FTC did receive a grant of £115,000 in April 2014 and it was subsequently allocated to support community groups.

MDC will finalise the 2015/16 tax base figure including Frome at its Council meeting on 15 December. They should receive the settlement figure from the Government mid December, but they do not have a specific date at the moment. However, by the time of the FTC Council meeting on 7 January we may know more. There are various options open to Council if/when we receive a grant for next year. It is suggested there is little point in discussing these options at this stage.

Earmarked reserves

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Cllrs should note the forecast amount in each of the existing EMRs. If Cllrs are not clear as to the purpose of them, please do contact the RFO, Jackie Wheeler, in advance of the meeting.

The table below lists the existing and proposed amounts in EMRs at 1 April 2015.

	Title	EMRs at 31.3.14/£	Proposed EMRs at 1.4.15/£	Description
9003	Elections	15,006	20,006	2015 elections
9004	Market Regen	7,250	7,250	Market development
9006	Sports	9,037	9,037	Towards new tennis courts
9008	Machinery & vehicle	17,838	23,738	Vehicle/machinery replacement 2015
9010	Play Equipment	22,449	22,449	Play equipment replacement
9011	Office relocation	141,486	141,486	Office relocation to the hub
9012	Committed	18,713	0	13/14 expenditure committed
9015	CCTV	5,000	5,000	CCTV/Security equipment in hub
9017	S106	13,500	13,500	Showfield adult fitness (£7.4k) VP Shelter (£6K)
9020	Town Centre Improvements	304,209	304,209	Market Place phase 1 (£288k) Palmer St (£16k)
9021	The Dippy	17,000	17,000	Dippy enhancement
9022	Fair Frome	18,281	18,000	2015/16 funding (yr3 of 3)
9023	Youth training and Further Education	49,500	49,500	To establish a youth apprenticeship hub
9024	Youth Funding	13,014	8,000	Frome Youth Bank grants (£7k) Youth Council Support (£1k)
9038	Community Groups Subsidy	115,000	115,000	Hub set up and subsidy (£23k) annually
9039	River Corridor	10,000	10,000	River Strategy work

General reserve

Cllrs will recall that Standing Orders state that the general reserve should be £180k. It is forecast that the general reserve at 1 April 2015 will be £230k. Given that there is always the possibility of emergencies or unforeseen opportunities (such as a contribution towards the acquisition of Whatcombe Fields for example), it is recommended that Cllrs retain the balance.

Recommendations

- 1) Agree to recommend to Council on the 07 January 2015 the:
 - a. Action Plan to 2016
 - b. Proposed organisational chart
 - c. Budget and precept demand for 2015/16
- 2) Note the Earmarked and General Reserve for 1 April 2015

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15. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 25 February 2015, Assembly Rooms