

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

To Members of Frome Town Council:

Dave Anderson; Eve Berry; Adam Boyden; Carole Bullen; Graham Burgess; Adrian Dobinson;
Toby Eliot; Pippa Goldfinger; Tricia Golinski; Damon Hooton; Claire Hudson; Peter
Macfadyen (Chair); Dickon Moore; Helen Sprawson-White; Helen Starkie; Mel Usher;
Nick White and
Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People); Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People)

FROME TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 18 March 2015, 7pm

Assembly Rooms, Christchurch Street West, Frome BA11 1EB

Please contact Rebecca Krzyzosiak in advance of the meeting if you are unable to attend
admin@frometowncouncil.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Questions, comments and information from the public and county and district Cllrs
2. Short presentation by Paula Blight, Chief Executive Mendip Community Support
3. Apologies for absence, declaration of members' interests and minutes from the last meeting on 7 January 2015 and the most recent committee meeting
4. Outstanding actions and forthcoming items
5. To approve the design brief for the refurbishment of Frome Town Hall
6. To decide on how to move forward at Saxonvale
7. Update on plans for Democracy Day
8. For decision: Cheese and Grain Tower project
9. For approval : Financial Regulations
10. To decide the next civic year calendar of meetings
11. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 20 May at the Assembly Rooms .

Yours sincerely



Paul Wynne, Town Clerk
Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome. BA11 1DS
12 March 2015

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AGENDA

- 1. Questions, comments and information from the public and county and district Cllrs**
- 2. Short presentation by Paula Blight, Chief Executive Mendip Community Support: a Vision for Volunteering in Frome**
- 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 7 January 2015 (Appendix 1) and to note the most recent minutes from Committee meetings.**

4. Outstanding Actions and forthcoming items (Appendix 2)

5. Town Hall

For decision: To agree the design brief for Frome Town Hall and receive an update on progress

Author: Town Clerk and Community Project Officer (Kate Hellard)

Summary

This report recommends Council agrees the design brief at Appendix 3 and seeks delegated authority to appoint contractors to design and cost the refurbishment of Frome Town Hall. It is expected that the successful contractors will go forward and manage the project to completion, subject to Council approval of the detailed design and costings.

Design Brief

We have now completed our public engagement exercise over what functions Frome Town Hall should provide and this has enabled us to draft the Design Brief at Appendix 3.

The needs the community has of the building are very similar to those discussed in previous Council meetings, which is heartening. The engagement process has helped us and the community realise the restrictions and the competing, and sometimes conflicting, demands of various groups. We believe it has been a very positive experience for everyone.

The design will include some work that we will inevitably not be able to afford within the budget we have. However, having a costed design enables us to prioritise the work and perhaps phase it over time.

We are now in a position to appoint a lead designer to carry out design. We are keeping an open mind over whether to appoint an architect, an interior designer, or other professional.

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The brief refers to a “designer”. As with the Cheese and Grain Mezzanine project, it seems most appropriate to appoint separately, a Quantity Surveyor, and when the time comes, a CDM manager, the builder and a facilities engineer to mastermind wiring and pipework.

In RIBA language (Appendix 4) we will appoint a lead contractor and a QS to take us from Stage 0 to 3, at which point we shall have detailed designs and costings.

At the end of stage 3 we will come back to Council for approval of the design and costings. It is the intention to retain the lead designer and QS to manage the project to completion (stage 7). Given that the next Council meeting is 20 May and depending on how we progress with the design stage and it might be necessary to ask the Mayor to call an extraordinary Council meeting to do this.

Costings

The costings remain unchanged from those which were noted by Cllrs in September. Working with the surveyor who carried out the full structural survey last year, we estimated that the building fees (building, damp proofing, ceiling stabilisation, internal and external decorations, wiring, plumbing, heating and additional furnishing etc) will be £345,000. The professional fees (designer/architect, Quantity Surveyor, CDM, project management) have been estimated at 11% of the build cost with a further 10% as a contingency. We have sufficient funds for this. The development of the brief has meant that what we want will probably cost more than we have and we will be in position to know how accurate our estimates are when we consider the detailed designs and costings. We may need to phase works, therefore. Please remember therefore that the costings will be refined and may go up. The building is over 100 years old and we may also come across essential works that we had not expected.

Timescale

We have recently been told by County that the building will not become vacant until mid-May, this represents a slippage of about a month on the timetable. We still expect to exchange contracts with County in late March or early April but with a completion date now in May.

Given summer holidays, and a refined period for design and tendering it reasonable to expect that Frome Town Hall will be open in the winter.

Sale of Palmer Street

We have now received estimated selling prices from a few local estate agents and it appears that a reasonable figure to expect is broadly in the region of £250,000. We have also had interest from prospective buyers directly. It is proposed that as soon as we have a date to move out we will market the property.

The trust

We tabled the various models for establishing a trust to own and manage the building in future at Council in November. We have since researched the pros and cons of each

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model and the most appropriate one is a simple Charitable Trust. It is proposed to work up a Charitable Trust model and table a proposal for a future meeting.

Recommendations

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.

6. For Decision: Saxonvale – next steps

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Summary

At the end of 2014, Jeremy Smalley, Planning & Regeneration consultant was given the brief to help the Council develop an Implementation Prospectus for Saxonvale. This report sets out the main conclusions that have emerged from Jeremy's work so far and some recommendations for the Council to approve.

The main recommendation is that the Town Council takes a lead by setting up a 'Saxonvale Project' and by exploiting powers in the Localism Act works towards the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Order and/or a Business Development Order that would grant planning permission for development that is in line with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The first phase of work would involve working closely with Mendip District Council and other landowners to secure cooperation and an approach to Government agencies to secure the necessary funding for a second delivery phase. The proposal is that the Council allocates £16k from the 2015/16 Neighbourhood Plan Implementation budget for the first phase of work. Jeremy will attend the meeting to make a detailed presentation.

Background

- A number of problems have beset Saxonvale over the years:
- Lack of strong leadership.
- Multiple ownership, historic costs and loss of trust.
- Unrealistic land value aspirations.
- A deficit in the infrastructure to support major redevelopment.
- High 'abnormal' costs such as contamination, demolition and servicing.

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- Uncertainty created by a series of piecemeal planning applications including two that remain undetermined (Frontier Estates and Terramond) with an emphasis on high value retail and housing. The result of these applications if approved and developed will mean that access to and from the existing town centre will be unattractive and difficult, will not complement the town centre and place making that has made Frome resilient, the different development areas won't 'hang together', levels across the site will not be properly addressed and land around the site will become sterile and undeveloped.
- Frome is on the periphery of other's priorities e.g. the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mendip District and is often not considered a priority.

As a consequence, much of the site has remained derelict and underused over many years.

The potential

The work so far has not been about developing another masterplan. Indeed, Jeremy's main focus has been on how to take forward the regeneration of the site in terms of the when, how and whom as opposed to the what although he has endeavoured to better articulate the vision that is set out in the Neighbourhood Plan – see below. This section addresses these points.

First, it is important that someone acts to break the logjam at Saxonvale. Frome Town Council is in a good position to do so and assume the leadership role as we are best placed to represent local people's aspirations for the future of Frome. We are also the one organisation that is willing to drive this project forward.

Second, if planning powers (a Neighbourhood Development Order) for example under the Localism Act 2011 are applied to the site we will be able to ensure that the future of the site is determined locally.

Third, the potential of the site is huge. Based on Jeremy's research and initial discussions with landowners which are on-going, we are recommending that the Saxonvale site is considered in two parts shown in Appendix 5.

The Western Part

This part should provide for a limited expansion of the town centre from the historic core into the western end of Saxonvale. This should be physically linked by clear and accessible pedestrian routes and should incorporate:

- New town centre shops to meet the growing local demand for 'comparison' goods e.g. clothing and footwear.
- Enable the consolidation and expansion of the Silk Mill to provide additional creative workspace .
- A re-energised Kingsway precinct.
- Provision for a riverside walk .

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- Pedestrian access between the Blue Boar Inn and The Blue House and into the rear of Iceland and Iron Gates into a new public realm .
- A re-configured parking area.

The Eastern Part

The eastern end should be linked to the western part with clear and accessible pedestrian routes and should incorporate:

- A riverside walk and amenity area.
- New employment and business space building on the growing demand from local businesses.
- Housing that is affordable and that delivers new benchmarks in design, build quality and energy performance.
- Education and training facilities.
- Visitor accommodation to meet business and leisure visitor needs.

These proposals reflect the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the overall vision for the redevelopment of the site in the 2005 Garsdale Planning Brief.

Using the Localism Act

Jeremy has explored a range of planning ‘tools’ that would reduce the current uncertainty and move planning decisions forward. Of the tools at FTC’s disposal, the most powerful are considered to be the Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) and the Business Development Order (BDO). The Localism Act allows for BDOs where the predominant use is business. A BDO would grant planning permission following a ‘yes’ vote at a local referendum and is considered to be ideal for the western part of Saxonvale. It could permit changes of use, replacement shop fronts, public realm improvements and new retail and commercial uses. A NDO is a similar tool and could apply to the rest of Saxonvale.

The advantage of both is that they would place greater planning power and control in the hands of the local community although cooperation would be required from Mendip District Council (MDC).

Funding

This will be an expensive project but there are external funding sources that could assist with this process. These include the Growing Places Fund (administered by the Local Enterprise Partnerships), New Homes Bonus Local Legacy Fund, Neighbourhood Planning Reward Payment and s.106 planning obligations. When it comes to innovative housing solutions, there are funds available from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) under the Custom Build Homes Loan Funding and Custom Build Serviced Plots Loan Fund.

There are a number of delivery ‘vehicles’ at the disposal of FTC and partners that have been successfully used to regenerate brownfield sites in other areas. These opportunities will be covered in more detail in Jeremy’s presentation.

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Proposals for taking forward Phase 1 of FTC's work

Before we can prepare a NDO and/or BDO, there are some important pieces of work to be completed which have been grouped together as Phase 1 proposals. The individual elements of Phase 1 are shown in the table below and each proposal will be pursued concurrently.

Proposal	Detail	Resources	Timescale
Set up a 'Saxonvale Project' to secure the regeneration of the site in line with the approach set out in this report and the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a Project Sponsor and Lead Officer • Develop a project plan • Produce a 'pitch book'/ prospectus that would be used to present proposals to MDC, other landowners and prospective funding partners 	£8k	1 month
Pursue a Memorandum of Understanding with MDC	This would commit both parties to work exclusively together to lead the regeneration of Saxonvale	£6k to cover legal expenses etc.	Up to 3 months
Continue meetings with landowners	To outline what FTC intends to do next and to secure landowners' cooperation	£1k	Up to 2 months
Meet with HCA and LEPS	To secure their support	£1k	Up to 3 months

Recommendations

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 Plan.
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.

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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.

7. For information: Frome 2015 Hustings

Authors: Administrator and Receptionist

Summary

This report updates members on the progress of the 'Democracy Day' on 12 April at the Cheese and Grain. Prospective Parliamentary Candidates have confirmed they will attend a 'question time' style hustings. Candidates also standing in the Town and District elections will be invited to attend and 'set out their stall'.

Background

On 7 May 2015 Frome electors have the opportunity to vote for new Town and District councillors and our Member of Parliament. We seek to encourage people to register to vote (who may not yet have done so), engage with young people, as well as enable the local community at large to voice their concerns and issues close to them and explain how the three elections will work.

The aim of the event is to capture interest and cover the full range of options open to electors. The event is politically neutral. The format of the day is as follows:

1. The afternoon starts with a formal hustings. The public will have a well-advertised opportunity to ask pre-submitted questions, unseen by the candidates, with additional follow up questions as time allows. Questions will be selected with themes concerning the greatest relevance to issues faced by the people of Frome. The hustings will be chaired by Lisa Millard, Vice Principle of Frome Community College.
2. At the event all candidates standing for the Town and District elections will be invited to 'set out their stall'. This creates an opportunity for members of the public to meet them, discuss concerns and become better informed of their choices.
3. Refreshments will be available during the 'set out your stall' period.
4. During this informal exchange there will also be a soap box, where people can talk about issues that matter to them.
5. Costs for promotion, the hire of the Cheese and Grain, refreshments and catering are likely to be in the order of £500. Social media, posters and press releases will also be used to inform members of the public about the event.

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In the run-up to the elections we will make as much information available online as possible. We will also explore providing more information to electors via letter drops, noticeboards and the media.

8. For Decision: Progressing the proposed Bert Jansch Media Centre at the Cheese & Grain

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

Summary

This report brings Cllrs up-to-date on plans for the Bert Jansch Media Centre at the Cheese & Grain and seeks delegated authority to secure the necessary planning permission and landlord's consent for development works.

Background

Cllrs considered a proposal to bring the derelict upper two storeys of the Cheese & Grain Tower back into productive use at Council in January 2014. Reference at the time was made to the establishment of a recording studio and associated training facilities/workspace. Cllrs agreed that the Cheese & Grain's sub-lease could be extended to include this area for this purpose. The landlord, Mendip District Council, subsequently approved this proposal in principle subject to a detailed scheme being developed.

Since then, the Cheese & Grain has been investigating the availability of funding for the project, and architects have been working on a design funded by the Bert Jansch Foundation and Frome Development CIC. This has now been completed. The Foundation aims to sustain the creativity associated with Bert Jansch and his music by helping in the education and promotion of future generations of acoustic musicians.

Proposals

The key elements of the project are:

Media Centre

It is proposed to use the upper two floors of the Tower to create the 'Bert Jansch Media Centre.' The purpose is to develop not only sound engineering expertise for music recording but also expertise in areas such as online ticketing services, graphics, websites, social media marketing, public address/amplification and lighting systems. These are all disciplines that are important to the Cheese & Grain, other venues in the town, and the creative sector generally.

The Centre would incorporate a recording studio, control room, a reception and social area and small multi-purpose 'tech rooms.' The recording studio and adjoining tech rooms will be available for hire by the day/hour; to give local micro-enterprises and recording artists the facilities that are in short supply in Frome and surrounding areas. The development of the Centre is closely linked to the development of the C&G's training and apprenticeship programme that is planned to provide training and formal accreditation (qualifications) for between 3 and 6 local young people each year.

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Small river facing extension

A ground to first floor stair and lift shaft is to be constructed outside the historic envelope of the building as a small extension facing the river. The purpose of this extension would be to maximise internal space, provide an efficient means of transporting heavy equipment and instruments from the Media Centre to the back stage area and 'Stage Door' and to comply with the Fire Officer's recommendations in terms of means of escape.

Other improvements

Improvements are proposed to the river facing elevation of the Cheese & Grain building as a whole, to bring it up to the same standard as the other elevations and a new entrance into the main hall would also be constructed.

An illustration of the new scheme is shown in Appendix 6. This will also be shown at the meeting.

The plan is that an application will be made to the Heritage Lottery fund to secure the necessary funding. It is expected that the earliest that a start on construction would be made is summer 2016.

Next steps

Securing landlord and planning consent is a necessary pre-cursor to making a formal application for funding. The proposal is that FTC would make the necessary applications to Mendip District Council to enable this to happen. The cost of the planning application is estimated at £192.50 (with FTC's 50% discount). It will also be necessary to extend the area of FTC's lease and Frome Cheese & Grain's sub-lease to incorporate the new extension to the tower and so delegated authority will be necessary to progress this.

Recommendations

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

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9. For decision: Financial regulations

Author: Responsible Finance Officer

Purpose of report

To adopt the revised Financial Regulations

Background

This report was presented and recommended for approval by Council at IAC on 3 February 2015. The Financial Regulations were last reviewed by Council in their entirety in October 2013.

It is my responsibility to review and table the Financial Regulations for re-adoption by Council. I have worked with our Internal Auditors and taken their advice on this draft.

Councillors should note there are no fundamental changes proposed. However, I would like to bring attention to the proposed inclusions.

- FTC as a Living Wage Employer.
- The Ethical Matrix .
- Connected Party Declaration Form.
- Urgent repair or other work: this is proposed to increase from £5k to £10k as renovation of the Town Hall, for example could raise the need to commission immediate work .
- Arrangements and authorisation of BACS payments replacing cheque payments
- Permission for asset disposal increased from £200 to £500.

Recommendation

Approve the draft Financial Regulations at Appendix 7.

10. For Decision: Calendar for next civic year

Author: Administrator and Receptionist

Purpose of the report

To approve the calendar of civic meetings for Frome Town Council from June 2015 to May 2016 at Appendix 8.

Recommendation

Approve the new civic year calendar.

11. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 20 May 2015 at the Assembly Rooms.