

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

Minutes of the meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 26 August 2015 at 7pm
Assembly Rooms Christchurch St W, Frome BA11 1EB

Present:

Councillors: Al O’Kane, Alison Barclay, Colin Cobb, Gary Collinson, Heather Wride, Jean Boulton, Kate Bielby, Mel Usher, Nick White, Peter Macfadyen, Richard Ackroyd, Sheila Gore, Tim O'Connor, Toby Eliot, Tricia Golinski

In attendance:

District Cllrs Hooton, Berry, Rideout and Harris, Steve McIntyre from VAT Consultants.

Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Rebecca Krzyzosiak (Administration Officer), Hannah Paniccia (Finance and Admin apprentice), Jackie Wheeler (Responsible Finance Officer), Chris Stringer (Environmental Manager), Kate Hellard (Community Projects Officer), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development & Regeneration Manager)

12 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2015/60/FC	<p>1. Questions and Comments from the public</p> <p>Margaret Meryl informed the meeting that she had contacted SCC about the advertising and the general poor state of the three roundabouts Sainsbury/Homebase area of town. She said that SCC confirmed that roundabouts were a Highways responsibility and that they had agreed to look into improving the maintenance of them. SCC informed Margaret that local businesses could pay to advertise on roundabouts. Margaret didn’t accept that the advertisers in question were paying and Paul Wynne, Town Clerk, agreed to investigate advertising on roundabouts. District Cllr Damon Hooton also agreed to ask Homebase if they paid to advertise and if they did not to ask them to remove their signage.</p> <p>2. Questions and Comments from Cllrs</p> <p>Damon Hooton informed Council he was chair of MDC’s Scrutiny Board and has been investigating Broadband roll out provision in the district. BT would be providing updates to all parish councils on a regular basis. Damon also said he was investigating bus service provision and whether there it is possible get SCC to survey the whole county and regulate survey services. He asked for anyone who is interested in this area to contact him.</p> <p>Chairs of the newly established panels updated the meeting on panel progress and of the dates of the next meetings.</p>	PW DH

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2015/61/FC	<p>3. Presentation from Steve McIntyre from VAT Consultants</p> <p>Paul Wynne introduced this item and said he wanted Cllrs to receive an overview of VAT and how it impacts the parish sector. Steve informed Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special rules allow Councils to recover VAT on costs in delivering ‘non-business’ activities (statutory services funded by Precept, grants & their own funds) • ‘Non business’ activities in the Council’s case includes improving public open spaces, town centres and property transactions under ‘peppercorn’ arrangements. • Renting out property such as the café in the park, office space or meeting rooms in FTC premises is a “business” activity and comes under normal VAT rules even though they may not be made at ‘market value’ (e.g. lettings to community groups) and will be liable for VAT. • Project costs, such as refurbishment, for non-business activities are not liable for VAT but when refurbishing premises that will result in a business activity (renting out meetings rooms, and office space) then it raises a question about having to charge VAT on income and the recovery of VAT on the refurbishment costs. • VAT is not recoverable on works paid for from funds raised by third parties such as community groups, for example. <p>Kate Beilby thanked Steve for his advice.</p>	
2015/62/FC	<p>The meeting was formally opened at 7.20pm.</p> <p>4a. Apologies for absence</p> <p>Received from Cllrs Goldfinger and Puddick.</p>	
2015/63/FC	<p>4b. Declaration of members’ interests</p> <p>Ali Barclay declared a personal interest in item 6.</p>	
2015/64/FC	<p>4c. Minutes from the last meeting on 22 July 2015 and 12 August 2015</p> <p>Richard Ackroyd noted he had given his apologies for the meeting on 12 August and these were inserted to the minutes.</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 22 July 2015 and 12 August 2015 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Bielby, seconded Cllr Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2015/65/FC	<p>5. For information: Forecast expenditure for coming year compared to the budget</p>	

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	<p>Paul Wynne noted that at after three months of the financial year, the forecast year end was estimated at £20k less than the budget at the start of the year and that there were no concerns at this stage. A refined reforecast will be presented to Council in November.</p> <p>Jackie Wheeler noted that the External Auditors report on 2014/15 had no concerns and similarly the latest Internal Auditors report raised no concerns either. Cllrs noted the Internal Auditors report.</p> <p>Details of all payments over £500 reported since the last meeting were noted by Councillors. Councillors were invited to come into the office to 'spot check' and sign BACS payments retrospectively.</p> <p>Mel Usher asked the district Cllrs present to push MDC to conclude the outstanding s106 agreement with Bloor Homes at Garston as there was a significant amount that should be coming to the town. None volunteered.</p> <p>Nick White asked that the Apprentice Manager and the Heath and Well-being co-ordinator posts at the College and Health Centre respectively, that are part funded by FTC, could provide a progress report to Council in the near future. Paul Wynne noted that the latter had been invited to the Well-being panel meetings and that both would be invited to provide Council with a progress report.</p> <p>Richard Ackroyd and Jean Boulton both asked for the floral budget for next year to be increased. Jean suggested engaging with local businesses and community groups to get their support for this. Kate Beilby informed Council that there was a meeting of Cllrs on 1 September to discuss floral plans for next year.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>PWh/PWy</p>
2015/66/FC	<p>6. For decision: Grants applications for approval</p> <p>Peter Macfadyen explained how the role of the Grants Advisory Group worked, and supported its recommendations. The fundraising contract was being reviewed; that it had been a success in supporting groups to secure external funding as well as enabling them to become "grant ready". The expectation was that a similar contract would be awarded again due to the benefit it provided for the community.</p> <p>Damon Hooton noted that district and county Cllrs all had their own grant budgets and encouraged local groups to be directed to these Cllrs for financial support. Jean Boulton raised the possibility of developing joint criteria and pooling town, district and county grants.</p> <p>Tim O'Connor asked if future grant recommendations could include a reason why the full amount was not proposed to be awarded.</p>	<p>KH</p>

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	<p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the recommendations of the Grants Advisory Board in the report 2. Agree that the Grant Advisory Group will lead a review of the Community Grants and the fundraising support contract and a report will be brought back to Council in October 2015. <p>Proposed Cllr Ackroyd, seconded Cllr Boulton, agreed by majority.</p>	KH
2015/67/FC	<p>7. For Decision: To appoint an event organiser for the ‘Switch On – European Energy Conference’ 5 March 2016</p> <p>Damon Hooton, as Frome Twinning Association lead on the thematic conferences project, suggested that the indication of the budget for attendance at the thematic conferences in Murrhardt and Rabka was insufficient.</p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse noted he was meeting Damon the following day to discuss the conferences.</p> <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appoint Pippa Goldfinger as the project sponsor 2. Approve the recruitment of an event organiser on a contract basis at an appropriate rate. 3. Delegate the recruitment and management of the contract to Anna Francis in consultation with Pippa Goldfinger. <p>Proposed Cllr Gore, seconded Cllr Boulton, agreed by majority.</p>	AF
2015/68/FC	<p>8. For decision: To deliver new Mary Baily Community Tennis Courts</p> <p>John Price, chair of the Frome Selwood Tennis Club, said he supported the recommendations; noted that this type of partnership was the way forward; noted that the tennis club had been fully involved in the project so far; and, was looking forward to agreeing an arrangement to manage the courts with FTC.</p> <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the current stage of the project 2. Agree the finances, including FTC taking out an interest free loan of £10,000 from the LTA repayable over 10 yrs. 3. Approve progress to the construction phase and delegate to the Environment Manager to deliver the project 4. Applaud the tennis club’s contributions to the project <p>Proposed Nick White, seconded Ali Barclay, agreed unanimously.</p>	CS

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2015/69/FC	<p>9. For information: Update on progress on the Frome Town Hall project and for decision: To appoint Cllr Colin Cobb as project sponsor</p> <p>Paul Wynne reported that detailed design option and costings would be tabled at the next meeting and noted that there would be a need to compromise on the Design Brief, as previously noted at Council meetings, or explore sources of additional funding.</p> <p>Colin Cobb, proposed project sponsor, highlighted that this type of compromise was common on projects of this type.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i> Appoint Colin Cobb as project sponsor.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Golinski, seconded Cllr White, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2015/70/FC	<p>10. For decision: To approve the Annual Report for 2014/15</p> <p>Paul Wynne, thanked Sheila Gore for her advice on presenting the sections on finance in a more accessible way.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i> Adopt the Annual Report for 2014/15</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Wride, seconded, Cllr Ackroyd, unanimously.</p>	
2015/71/FC	<p>11. For information: Outstanding actions</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
2015/72/FC	<p>12. For information: Update on ongoing projects</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
2015/73/FC	<p>13. The next Council meeting will be on 23 September 2015 at 7pm, held in the Conference Room at the Medical Practice Enos Way, Frome, Somerset BA11 2FH</p>	

The meeting was closed at 8.15pm.