

# **FROME TOWN COUNCIL**

*making Frome a better place*

## **ANNUAL MEETING OF FROME TOWN COUNCIL**

**Wednesday 25 May 2016, 7pm**

Assembly Rooms, Christchurch Street West, Frome BA11 1EB

Members of Frome Town Council are:

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

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence, declaration of members’ interests and minutes from the last meeting on 27 April 2016
2. Short presentation from Rachel Clarke and Gary Maule, Frome Police
3. Election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayors
4. Questions and comments from the public
5. Questions and comments from Cllrs
6. For decision: Adopt the General Power of Competence
7. For decision: Making use of the Ethical decision making matrix
8. For decision: Improving communications and decision making
9. For decision: Appointment of Cllrs as sponsors of projects and areas of work
10. For decision: Standing Orders
11. For decision: Calendar of meetings
12. For information: Project update
13. For decision: Banking, financial overview and investments
14. For decision: Agree the Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2016 and Earmarked reserves
15. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 13 July 2016

Yours sincerely



Paul Wynne, Town Clerk.

Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome BA11 1DS

18 May 2016

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

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## AGENDA

**1. Apologies for absence, declaration of members' interests and minutes from the last meeting on 27 April 2016**

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 27 April 2016 at 7pm  
Selwood Academy, Berkley Road, Frome BA11 2EF

Present:  
Councillors: Richard Ackroyd, Ali Barclay, Kate Bielby, Colin Cobb, Gary Collinson, Toby Elliot, Tricia Golinski, Pippa Goldfinger, Sheila Gore, Peter Macfadyen, Tim O'Connor, Nick White, Heather Wride

In attendance:  
Gavin Eddy and Tabitha Clayson (Frome Independent), Annabelle Macfadyen (Community Connections), Des Harris (MDC Cllr), Adam Boyden (MDC Cllr), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Officer), Kate Hellard, Ruth Knagg, Emma Parker (Community Projects Officers), Laura Poulton (Administration Officer)

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
<b>2016/48/FC</b>	<p>The meeting started at 7.05pm</p> <p><b>1a. Apologies for absence</b> Received from Jean Boulton, Al O'Kane, Cath Puddick and Mel Usher</p> <p><b>1b. Declaration of members' interests</b> Peter Macfadyen declared a personal interest in item 8. Gary Collinson declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 10.</p> <p><b>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 23 March 2016</b> The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 23 March 2016 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed Nick White, seconded Pippa Goldfinger, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<b>2016/49/FC</b>	<p><b>3. Questions and comments from the public</b></p> <p>Margaret Merrill asked whether it was possible to improve the exterior of the empty building next to the Memorial Theatre. Pippa Goldfinger explained that the building was privately owned and asked Jane Llewellyn to contact MDC to ask if the owners could be contacted. Margaret also asked if anything could be done to prevent fly posting on the BT boxes in the town. Jane Llewellyn said</p>	<b>JL</b>

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	<p>that she would report this to MDC and also request permission from them to be removed by the Rangers. In addition, FTC would contact the promotor of the events to ask them to stop fly posting.</p> <p>Paul Wynne introduced Emma Parker as the new part time Community Projects Officer.</p>	<p><b>JL</b> <b>CS</b></p>
<p><b>2016/50/FC</b></p>	<p><b>4. Questions and comments from Cllrs</b></p> <p>Heather Wride arrived at 7.20pm</p> <p>Des Harris noted that since meetings were held between MDC and The Landscape Group communications had improved and this resulted in a much tidier town centre.</p> <p>Tricia Golinski asked if an update on the improvements at the train station could be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Adam Boyden noted that there was now a concrete barrier at Gypsy Lane to deter fly tippers. He had met with the owners of Commerce Park who were happy to improve signage for cyclists. He noted residents were appreciative of the new bins at the Old Showfield. Southwest Energy had confirmed they were accepting the licenses to eventually frack in the area. Adam noted that he was meeting with RadCo to talk about how retrospective improvements to the exterior of the Co – Op at Fromefield could be made.</p>	<p><b>PWh</b></p>
<p><b>2016/51/FC</b></p>	<p><b>2. Short presentation from Gavin Eddy and Tabitha Clayson, Frome Independent Market</b></p> <p>Gavin Eddy explained that the Frome Independent was a not for profit company. He noted that their aims when they began were to establish a Sunday market in Frome. Tabitha Clayson explained that the December 2015 market attracted 15,000 people into the town and because of its success; she has had to deal with some issues around parking and congestion, which led to increased costs. Tabitha thanked FTC for the joint funding with MDC that allowed them to begin the 2016 markets from April. Tabitha said that the Frome Independent were looking into new and innovative ways to ensure the markets could continue such as the loyalty scheme, Market Maker.</p> <p>Kate Bielby asked what the value was to Frome. Tabitha estimated it to be approximately £2 million. She noted from her research of those that had signed up to the Market Makers scheme showed that the average age was 31 – 60 and average spend was between</p>	

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	<p>£10 – 50. Most of those who come from outside of the town also spent money in Frome shops and cafes.</p> <p>Des Harris asked what the plans were for clearing the site lines on Cheap Street. Gavin Eddy explained that the overnight parking at Boyle Cross affects the number of stalls along Cheap Street. However when an event is held at the Silk Mill it does draw people up Cheap Street and into the open shops.</p>	
<b>2016/52/FC</b>	<p><b>5. For information: Projects update</b> The projects update was noted.</p>	
<b>2016/53/FC</b>	<p><b>6. For decision: Next steps on Neighbourhood Plan following MDC approval to go to referendum</b> Nick White asked if the Neighbourhood Plan referendum could be done at the same time as the EU referendum. Jane Llewellyn explained that she had asked the question of MDC but was told that the costs could be the same and the issues could become confused.</p> <p>Peter Macfadyen congratulated Jane for her hard work to get the Neighbourhood Plan to the point of referendum and noted that once adopted it would be important to work closely with MDC to ensure the NP policies were followed.</p> <p>The recommendations were to delegate responsibility to Jane Llewellyn, in consultation with the project sponsor Pippa Goldfinger, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft a Communications Plan to encourage electors to vote, and implement it once the referendum date is known.</li> <li>2. Use the Neighbourhood Plan EMR to cover costs up to a maximum of £5,000</li> </ol> <p>Proposed Richard Ackroyd, seconded Nick White, agreed unanimously.</p>	<b>JL</b>
<b>2016/54/FC</b>	<p><b>7. For decision: Proposed projects to implement the Well Being Pillar of the Work Programme 2016/17</b> Kate Hellard introduced this element of the work programme and identified the projects that had been completed and those that were in progress.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the projects detailed in the report.</p>	

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	Proposed Toby Eliot, seconded Peter Macfadyen, agreed unanimously.	
<b>2016/55/FC</b>	<p><b>8. For decision: Building communities at street level – results and recommendations from a research project called Community Connections</b></p> <p>Colin Cobb arrived at 8.19pm</p> <p>Kate Hellard thanked Meki Nattero and Annabelle Macfadyen for their work on the project. Annabelle explained the purpose of the project, the events that they had run and their findings and recommendations from speaking with residents.</p> <p>Toby Eliot felt that a resident’s newsletter was not the most effective way to explain the responsibilities of the three tiers of local government in Frome. Ali Barclay felt that it was an important message to get across but one that needed to be done in a more creative way.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find ways to inform the community in order to explain the roles and responsibilities of the three Councils serving Frome and to promote the work of FTC in line with the communications strategy (at agenda item 11).</li> </ol> <p>Proposed Ali Barclay, seconded Richard Ackroyd, agreed by majority.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Provide a programme of support for community leaders in the three pilot areas alongside the facilitation of a community meeting, support to build local community groups and opportunities for residents to meet local ward councillors.</li> <li>3. Deliver a series of ‘street level events’ managed by the CPO’s to address the specific recommendations relating to Trinity Park and Packsaddle.</li> <li>4. Review the project in 6 months with a view to considering training for community leaders and extending the project to other communities across the town.</li> </ol> <p>Proposed Toby Eliot, seconded Richard Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p><b>KH</b></p> <p><b>KH</b></p> <p><b>KH</b></p> <p><b>KH</b></p>
<b>2016/56/FC</b>	<b>9. For decision: Criteria and timetable for community grants 2016/17</b>	

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	<p>Tim O'Connor asked for clarification on who Purple Elephant were. Ruth Knagg explained that it was a CIC run by Sue Willis and Rachel Griffin and they delivered projects like the Children's Festival and Youth conference.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ratify the Town Clerk's decision to award a £3k grant to Purple Elephant towards delivery of the Children's Festival, as an exception to the normal process.</li> <li>2. Small grants of up to £300 will be awarded by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, up to a maximum of £3k in any one year.</li> <li>3. Large grants, normally capped at £3k, will be considered in three funding rounds in the financial year (June, September and February) by the Grants Advisory Group with its recommendations considered by Council at the subsequent meeting.</li> <li>4. Approve the updated grant criteria for 2016/17 that reflects the priorities in the Corporate Strategy.</li> </ol> <p>Proposed Tim O'Connor, seconded Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p><b>RK</b></p>
<p><b>2016/57/FC</b></p>	<p><b>10. For information: Update on how Sport and Leisure recommendations will be delivered in 2016/17</b> The progress report was noted.</p>	
<p><b>2016/58/FC</b></p>	<p><b>11. For decision: Ensuring FTC provides good quality information in a planned and consistent way</b> Cllrs had a discussion on the importance of a consistent brand with a clear set of guidelines rather than a 'corporate brand'.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the principles and strategy at Appendix 2</li> <li>2. Commission guidelines, including a consistent visual identity, at a maximum cost of £5k. This to be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Kate Bielby.</li> <li>3. Draft an emergency plan as described in the last row of the table at Appendix 2. Delegate this to the Town Clerk, in consultation with Kate Bielby.</li> </ol> <p>Proposed Pippa Goldfinger, seconded Colin Cobb, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p><b>PWy</b></p> <p><b>PWy</b></p>

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<b>2016/59/FC</b>	<p><b>12. For ratification: Response from FTC on the planning application for the Southfield Farm site</b>  Pippa Goldfinger explained that the Planning Group was only given the same amount of time to consider this application as a normal household application. It was suggested that Pippa wrote to the chair of the planning board to say how disappointed the group was by the lack of consideration time provided for such an important application.</p> <p>The recommendation was to ratify the response from FTC on the planning application for Southfield Farm.</p> <p>Proposed Peter Macfadyen, seconded Nick White, agreed unanimously.</p>	<b>PG</b>
<b>2016/60/FC</b>	<p><b>13. For information: Health and safety update</b>  The Town Clerk advised there was nothing to report.</p>	
<b>2016/61/FC</b>	<p><b>14. The next meeting will be at 7pm on 25 May 2016 at the Assembly Rooms. This meeting will elect the next Mayor of FTC and other positions held by Cllrs.</b></p>	
<p>The Chair closed the meeting at 9.07pm</p>		

2. **A short presentation from Rachel Clarke and Gary Maule, Frome Police**
3. **Election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor**
4. **Questions and comments from the public**
5. **Questions and comments from Cllrs**
6. **For decision: Adopt the General Power of Competence**  
Author: Paul Wynne, Town Clerk

*General power of competence (GPC)*

Every year at the May Council meeting FTC needs to agree to adopt the GPC. This note recommends that FTC adopt the GPC again.

The power to deliver local services is provided by the GPC. It was brought into force by the Localism Act 2011. The Explanatory Memorandum states:

“The Government’s intention in providing eligible parish councils with the general power of competence is to better enable them to take on their enhanced role and allow them to do the things they have previously been unable to do under their existing powers”

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In short, the GPC gives eligible local councils, “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” as long as they do not break other laws. This is a powerful tool and flips legislation around from being explicit about what a Council can do (and therefore everything that isn’t permitted is not allowed).

In order to use the GPC Cllrs must agree at this meeting that it has an electoral mandate (2/3 of the Cllrs elected) and have a properly qualified Clerk. I can confirm both of these.

### *Recommendation*

Confirm that the eligibility criteria for utilising the power of general competence are met.

## **7. For decision: Making use of the Ethical decision making matrix**

Authors: Toby Eliot and Jackie Wheeler, Responsible Finance Officer

In 2013, the Council developed and adopted a tool to help make ethical decisions, the Ethical Decision Making Matrix (EDMM). The original intention of developing an ethical policy for the Town Council was to ensure that Council decisions were taken with ethical considerations in mind. The matrix was designed with the support of locally based experts and remains relevant. The EDMM is Appendix 1 at the end of this report. In February, it was agreed to review the EDMM and report back with suggestions about how it might be used in the future.

### *Review of use*

The EDMM has been used mainly in the appointment of suppliers and contractors for FTC contracts. The design of the matrix and the nature of the questions asked has made this application difficult on occasions. Some of the circumstances in which the EDMM has been applied are:

- When considering the appointment of the architects for the Town Hall renovation project, each applicant was asked to respond to the EDMM and the Living Wage questions. The appointment was made taking their EDMM answers into consideration.
- In the switch to Green Energy and Ecotricity for the gas and electric supply to the Town Hall and was completed as soon as was possible.
- The ethical attitude of the Charity Bank and the Co Op helped with the decision to invest the Town Council’s funds with them.
- When discussing the EDMM with the local banks they could only answer at branch level and whilst they had the authority to refuse opening a business account if they deemed the business was not ethical, they could not comment on the global bank ethics.

### *Future use of the EDMM*

It is proposed that the full EDMM is used by authors of reports to Council. A writer of any report where a recommendation is made and a decision required should complete the EDMM for both a scenario where the recommendations were accepted and for one where



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they were not. The completed EDMM should not form part of the report but the report should carry a section (possibly entitled Ethical Considerations) where the conclusion of the completed EDMM is summarised.

Councillors should use this summary to help make appropriate decisions. Part of the original policy allowed for decisions to be made against the result of the completed EDMM where there were other factors to consider – this would remain the case.

The completed EDMM documents should be held by the Council for councillors to review.

### *Making decisions about suppliers*

Cllr Sheila Gore and Environmental Manager, Chris Stringer are working on a practical simplified 'tick box' version of the EDMM that will be more appropriate to use with suppliers. This will be brought to the most appropriate meeting.

### *Recommendation*

1. Continue to use the Ethical Decision Making Matrix when making decisions
2. For reports to Cllrs that require a decision, authors will complete the EDMM for both a scenario where the recommendations were accepted and for one where they were not
3. Provide in report for meetings a summary of these scenarios.

## **8. For decision: Improving communications and decision making**

Authors: Paul Wynne, Town Clerk and various Cllrs

### *Introduction*

In May 2015, the Council established four Panels to assist in setting the direction of travel for the new administration. The Panels were: Sports and Leisure, Town Centre, Wellbeing and Keep Frome Clean and all reported to the Council with recommendations, which are now being worked on. Panels were intended to flush out new ideas from the community and groups/individuals with particular interests. A new Panel for Performing Arts was successfully launched on April 28th. Other Panels may be launched in future as the need arises.

Currently the monthly Council meeting fulfils all of the Council's formal decision making requirements. However, the wind-down of the intensive period of Panel work has left a gap in the deliberation process. There are clear shortcomings around communications, opportunities to discuss issues in depth and public involvement. The unique make up of this Council makes it possible to consider new forms of decision making and dispersed leadership roles.

A small group of Councillors and staff has met to consider these matters and their recommendations are contained in this report.

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### *Background and values*

Sometimes it feels as if the Council, despite the fact that it has reviewed all of its functions and looked hard at why it exists, is still dealing with 21<sup>st</sup> century issues whilst locked in a 19<sup>th</sup> century institution.

This report sets out recommendations on improved communications and better decision making. The object of the change is to ensure open, understandable, justifiable decision making and to get the best from a team of committed, skilled town Councillors and motivated professional staff.

Over the years, a set of background values on engagement have emerged, any report such as this need to bear them in mind.

### *Building community engagement*

We will continue to engage the community as much and as often as possible. Committees, whilst being open and transparent, are not always the best vehicle for this type of interaction so other methods should continue to be used.

### *Broadening decision making*

In order to achieve this, we will use a mix of single issue meetings, establish committees with a wide scope and increase the number of fully involved Cllrs via the roles of project sponsors, a deputy Leader and deputy committee chairs. This should result in greater vibrancy and increased innovation.

### *Collaborative decision making*

We will continue to work with and through other organisations and individuals. This strengthens the validity of decisions but also achieves more for less. The Council's role is to act as a facilitator and, wherever possible, a positive contributor. To ensure success we will need to be clear and transparent about our objectives and be open to new ideas.

### *Agility*

It is essential that we do not become rule bound. Fluidity, whether it's in recognising new opportunities as they arise, learning from elsewhere, speedy direction changes or just how we relate to one another, must be the hallmark of a 21st century Town Council.

### *Getting the balance right between "hard" and "soft"*

The work the Council undertake falls into two categories: the "hard" which is about finance, rapid decision making, monitoring, sticking to agreed timetables, being accountable and making things happen; the "soft" which is about how we communicate, listening, facilitating and collaboration with others in the community. Getting a balance between these two elements is crucial.

### ***Improved communication between Staff and Councillors***

The new communications strategy considered at April's council meeting will go some way to providing clearer messages to the town. We have however so many projects in hand that we

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risk falling short on internal communication. The following recommendations are designed to improve this.

It is recommended that:

1. The Town Clerk continues to circulate a full update on a fortnightly basis that will encapsulate, in easy to read language, the current work of the Town Council. This update will be circulated to all staff, all Frome Cllrs for all three Councils, the MDC Cabinet, neighbouring parishes and the local media. As an experiment, a video clip by the Town Clerk of his report will be placed on the website.
2. Between the Town Clerk updates, staff will keep Cllrs informed of items of interest through emails.
3. Staff will circulate to Cllrs significant announcements before they are posted or released made in all media outlets including social media.
4. Cllrs will keep the relevant staff, as well as other Cllrs, informed of courses attended, significant discussions and major concerns or issues.
5. Following Council's approval in April, the Senior Staff Advisory Group will continue with the four senior staff and four Cllrs: the Mayor, the Leader and the two Committee Chairs. These meetings will be called by the Town Clerk.

### ***Improved decision making***

The remainder of this report proposes a series of measures to improve decision making. The recommendations are to establish two new committees, and refine the roles of the Planning Advisory Group, the Leader and the Town Clerk. This requires Standing Orders to be updated and these are a separate item on the agenda. However, to help Cllrs, the specific extracts from Standing Orders has been re-produced in each section below.

#### *Committees*

To avoid an over reliance on the decision making role of the Council, it is recommended that two committees be formed - one for Town Matters and one that concerns itself primarily with Council Co-ordination. Both committees should be as informal and as interactive as possible whilst also taking on the majority of decision making within the Council.

They should provide a structured format for Cllrs to listen to the people of Frome whilst also involving experts and interested parties. It is envisaged that very few items will be referred to Council for a decision.

It will be important that enough time is given to considering how committees can best achieve more openness, more engagement and make the best decisions. For example, perhaps shorter reports with more oral explanations and visuals might be tried. Much more emphasis should be placed on the chair being a facilitator to aid discussion rather than the traditional role.

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It is proposed that both committees consist of nine Cllrs with the Mayor, the Leader and the two committee chairs sitting on both. Cllrs are encouraged to attend as many meetings as they are able.

In order to establish these two committees the Council's Standing Orders need to be amended. The complete Standing Orders are tabled next on this meeting's agenda. The relevant extract is directly below.

*(Extract from Standing Orders)*

### *Committees*

- a. Each committee will consist of nine Cllrs, proportional to the political strength of the Council*
- b. Each committee will meet on at least five occasions each year*
- c. The chairs of all committees, the Mayor and the Leader will be members of every committee*
- d. The chairs of committees will manage meetings in a way that maximises engagement of the public as well as Cllrs, without compromising the decision making process.*
- e. Cllrs who are not members of a committee may participate in debate but will not be permitted to vote on business at that meeting*
- f. The Council may establish or dissolve a committee at any Council meeting*

### *Town Matters Committee*

This committee will be primarily externally focused and concern itself with wellbeing, prosperity and sports and leisure. It will discuss new concepts, learn from others but also monitor the performance of these areas against the annual work programme.

Its remit will include work on town centre regeneration, building community and environmental resilience; it will reach out to other public sector organisations like the NHS and build working relationships with businesses and the voluntary sector.

This committee will be a forum for discussing existing and future town matters in detail and will be chaired in a way that encourages engagement of the public. The relevant extract from Standing Orders is directly below. The complete Standing Orders are tabled next on this meeting's agenda.

*(Extract from Standing Orders)*

### *Terms of reference of the Town Matters Committee*

*The committee will:*

- a. Incur expenditure where it has an allocated budget provision;*
- b. Be responsible for promoting prosperity in the town in line with the Strategic Plan 2015-20*
- c. Be responsible for promoting the regeneration of the town centre in line with the Strategic Plan 2015-20*

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- d. *Be responsible for promoting the wellbeing and resilience of the community in line with the Strategic Plan 2015-20*
- e. *Oversee the Community Grants process*

### *Council Co-ordination Committee*

This committee will ensure that the Council as an organisation is running efficiently and effectively.

It will be primarily internally focused and be responsible for areas such as HR, health and safety, income and expenditure, budget preparation, IT and marketing and communications processes.

Its remit will also include ensuring the maximum benefit from Frome Town Hall and the Council's estate including parks and open spaces, and the work of the Environment team. The relevant extract from Standing Orders is directly below. The complete Standing Orders are tabled next on this meeting's agenda.

*(Extract from Standing Orders)*

### *Terms of Reference of the Council Co-ordination Committee*

*The committee will:*

- a. *Incur expenditure where it has an allocated budget provision*
- b. *Be responsible for financial administration, including investments, monitoring income and expenditure against the budget and make recommendations to Council accordingly*
- c. *Be responsible for any projects related to participatory budgeting*
- d. *Be responsible for all aspects of risk management and insurance*
- e. *Be responsible for all aspects of reviewing Health and Safety policy and monitoring health and safety incidents, such as staff accidents at work or accidents to the public on the estate*
- f. *Be responsible for the Frome Town Hall and the Council estate;*
- g. *Be responsible for the work of the Environment Team in line with the Strategic Plan, including events on the Council estate*
- h. *Be responsible for all processes related to communications and marketing and for monitoring implementation of, and reviewing, the Communications Strategy, including the adoption of the Annual Report*
- i. *Be responsible for all ICT planning and delivery (including websites);*
- j. *Be responsible for day to day aspects related to human resources, while Council retains responsibility for any changes to staff organisation chart and staff grades*
- k. *Establish a group, as and when needed, comprising three Cllrs including the Chair to address staff disciplinary issues and disputes beyond the authority of the Town Clerk*
- l. *Be responsible for all multi-year funding arrangements that support third party organisations*
- m. *Oversee civic and twinning matters*

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### *Planning Advisory Group (PAG)*

This Group is something of an anomaly and yet it is an important part of the Council business. One of the original reasons for setting up the Group was the feeling that calling it a Committee was a misnomer because the Town Council is merely a consultee (albeit a statutory one) and not a decision maker on planning matters.

As a result, for minor planning applications, it is proposed in future to direct the public to their district Cllrs, Mendip's Planning Board and the relevant Mendip planning officer rather than discuss these items in PAG. The role of PAG will be made clearer on the website and in written materials with instructions about how to make and respond to planning applications and how to contact the relevant District Cllrs, officers and the Planning Board. FTC's responses to the minor applications will in future be delegated to the Town Clerk (and through him to the Planning and Regeneration Officer) in consultation with the chair of PAG.

It is also proposed that PAG should increasingly focus on major planning issues. PAG will actively engage with and even search out developers who will work with FTC in advance of any formal planning application – maximising the use of the Neighbourhood Plan and Town Design Statement. PAG will also support local residents affected by inappropriate development proposals and closely monitor decisions made by Mendip. PAG will also devise policies, update plans, encourage better design and consider how decisions made on highways, signage and street furniture proposals can be improved.

*(Extract from Standing Orders)*

### *Remit of the Planning Advisory Group*

*The Planning Advisory Group (PAG) will:*

- a. Consist of seven Cllrs proportional to the political strength of the Council and meet on at least six occasions each year*
- b. Include a member of staff to provide advice and administrative support*
- c. Undertake all duties of the Council under Town and Country Planning Acts, Orders and Regulations and all matters relating to roads and highways including Road Closure Notices, road signs, traffic management, traffic regulations and bus shelters*
- d. Within the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, campaign for the best development and, where possible, identify and work with prospective developers in advance of any planning application*
- e. Make recommendations to Council on matters that, in its opinion, are significant (occasionally, responses to urgent significant consultations will need to be ratified by Council)*
- f. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the chair, to respond to minor planning or highways issues on behalf of the Council*
- g. Promote to the community the role of district Cllrs, district staff and the Planning Board on minor planning applications*
- h. Provide straightforward written advice on how to make & respond to planning applications.*

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### *The Council Meeting*

This remains the one meeting, which all Cllrs are expected to attend. There are some functions it must fulfil such as reviewing the Council Strategy, agreeing the annual Work Programme, agreeing the annual budget, setting the precept and reviewing annually the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other chapters of the Council's constitution.

The prime function of the Council is instilling a sense of direction for the Town and the Council.

In addition, Council meetings should become "events" in themselves. They will be well advertised, full of debate and make clear decisions. It is recommended that each Council meeting will take one issue and discuss it in depth. The discussion could be facilitated to encourage as much public engagement as possible. Subjects could include, for example: town centres of the future, the future of education, policing and social services in Frome, creating a carbon neutral town and greening the town. The remit of the Council in Standing Orders remains unchanged.

As it is proposed to establish two new committees, it is no longer necessary for Council to meet monthly and the recommendation is to meet six times a year.

It is proposed that there will be six Council meetings per annum with the two committees each meeting five times per annum. Making 16 meetings per annum (an annual increase of 4 on the current arrangement). The proposed calendar of meetings is a separate agenda item.

### *Dissemination*

All committee and council meetings will be more heavily advertised. It is intended that informal outcomes be on social media the next day and more videos of pertinent debates will be shot for the website and elsewhere.

### *Roles of Leader and Town Clerk*

The roles of Leader and Town Clerk are heavily intertwined and both work together closely on a daily basis. In law there is no position of Leader in a Town Council. Even so, FTC has appointed a Leader for the past five years. This year it is proposed to elect a deputy Leader too.

The role of the Town Clerk is more heavily defined; in effect, when the Council or its committees are not in session all decisions are in theory made by the Town Clerk or through delegated authority.

The roles of the Leader and the Town Clerk in Standing Orders have been amended to bring them in line with the themes and ways of working as described in this report. The respective roles and responsibility are described below.

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

## *making Frome a better place*

*(Extract from Standing Orders)*

*The role of the Leader of the Council*

*Leader of the Council will:*

- a. Work with the Town Clerk and Cllrs to develop and propose to Council the strategic direction and policy objectives of the Council*
- b. Not alter the strategic direction of the Council*
- c. Work with the Town Clerk to ensure the strategic direction and operational management of the Council are working effectively*
- d. Work with the Town Clerk to negotiate on behalf of the Council with other local authorities and organisations in order to deliver the strategic direction and policy objectives*
- e. Discuss with the Mayor and relevant Committee Chairs the purpose of any negotiation and report the outcome to Council or the relevant committee*
- e. Be a member of all standing committees and the Senior Staff Advisory Group.*

*With regard to the Leader, The Town Clerk will:*

- f. Brief the Leader on a weekly basis on the operational work of the Council and issues within the town;*
- g. Seek advice from the Leader when making significant decisions concerning council business*
- h. Have their leave or time off in lieu agreed in advance by the Leader;*
- i. Have their performance appraised at least annually jointly by the Leader and the Mayor;*
- j. Ensure the Leader is aware of any upcoming meetings with external organisations and the Leader will do the same for the Town Clerk;*
- k. Jointly, with the Leader, consider the forward plan and strategic documents on a monthly basis and jointly propose changes and additions to Council and/or the relevant committee.*

*Town Clerk*

- a. The deputy Town Clerk will be the Responsible Finance Officer and the RFO will undertake the role of the Town Clerk during the Town Clerk's absence*

*Town Clerk will:*

- b. Implement decisions of the Council via delegated authority and have overall managerial responsibility for service delivery*
- c. Have overall managerial responsibility for staff recruitment (including the drafting of job descriptions) and management, while alterations to the corporate staff structure and changes to staff grading shall remain Council responsibility*
- d. Provide objective advice on all matters*
- e. Liaise with other bodies in order to identify and keep abreast of important issues in the town*
- f. Act in an emergency without recourse to Council*



# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

## *making Frome a better place*

- g. Give public notice of the time, date, venue and agenda at least 3 clear days before a meeting of the Council or a committee*
- h. Send to all Cllrs the time, date, venue and the agenda of meetings of the Council, a committee or a sub-committee at least 3 clear days before the meeting, by hand delivery, by post or electronically*
- i. Clerk Council meetings*
- j. Make available for inspection by the public the minutes of meetings*
- k. Receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities*
- l. Receive and retain declarations of acceptance of office from Cllrs*
- m. Retain and make available for inspection by the public a copy of every Cllr's register of interests and any changes to it;*
- n. Process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998;*

### *Recommendations*

#### *Improved communications*

1. Approve the themes and ways of working as described in the report
2. The Town Clerk continues to circulate a full update on a fortnightly basis
3. Between the Town Clerk updates, staff will keep Cllrs informed of items of interest through emails
4. Staff to circulate to Cllrs significant announcements made in all media outlets including social media before they are posted or released
5. Cllrs to keep the relevant staff, as well as other Cllrs, informed of courses attended, significant discussions and major concerns or issues
6. Retain the Senior Staff Advisory Group comprising the four senior staff and four Cllrs: the Mayor, the Leader and the two Committee Chairs. These meetings to be called by the Town Clerk

#### *Improved decision making*

7. Establish and adopt the remit of the Town Matters Committee
8. Elect nine Cllrs to the Town Matters Committee
9. Establish and adopt the remit of the Council Co-ordination Committee
10. Elect nine Cllrs to the Council Co-ordination Committee
11. Adopt the remit of the Planning Advisory Group
12. Elect seven Cllrs to the Planning Advisory Committee
13. Adopt the remit of the Leader and the Town Clerk
14. Elect the post of Leader and Deputy Leader

### **9. For decision: Appointment of Cllrs as sponsors of projects and areas of work**

Author: Paul Wynne, Town Clerk

At the February Council meeting, a list of project sponsors was agreed. Now that the remit of project sponsors has been slightly amended and agreed as part of the Standing Orders, it is a good time to re-confirm the list below. The only additional line is Cath Puddick has agreed to be the sponsor of twinning matters.

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*making Frome a better place*

*(Extract from Standing Orders)*

*Cllrs as Sponsors of projects or discrete areas of work*

- a. The role of a Sponsor is to advise, support, be a critical friend to the member of staff responsible for an area of work or a project and to inform other Cllrs of progress.*
- b. Sponsors are not decision makers*
- c. Cllrs are appointed as sponsors by the Council*

Cllr Ackroyd for environmental issues, including management

Cllr Boulton for business engagement and public transport

Cllr Bielby for PR and communications

Cllr Cobb for Town Hall improvements

Cllr Collinson for sport and leisure

Cllr Elliot and Gore for finance

Cllr Goldfinger for planning and design

Cllr Golinski for walking and cycling

Cllr Macfadyen for resilience

Cllr O'Kane for music and arts

Cllr Barclay for wellbeing

Cllr Usher for town centre

Cllr Puddick for twinning

*Recommendations*

1. Agree the remit of project sponsors
2. Agree the list of sponsors above

## **10. For decision: Standing Orders**

Author: Paul Wynne, Town Clerk

Each year at the Annual Council meeting, we are required to re adopt the Standing Orders. In a change to the structure of last year, it has been agreed to form two new committees; Council Co-ordination and Town Matters. These committees will operate alongside Council and the Planning Advisory Group. Therefore, you will see that the Standing Orders now include sections on the remit of each of these. In addition, there are sections on Advisory Groups, Panels and Cllr project sponsors.

The roles of the Leader and the Town Clerk have also been updated since last year.

For clarity, we have amended the order to ensure that each section reads as logically as possible.

The revised Standing Orders are at Appendix 2.

*Recommendation*

Agree the revised Standing Orders for 2016/17.

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

*making Frome a better place*

## 11. For decision: Calendar of meetings

Author: Laura Poulton, Administration Officer

In January 2016, Cllrs agreed the calendar of meetings for 2016/17. Since then it has been agreed to form two new committees. Below is the revised calendar of meetings for 2016/17.

Date		Committee	Venue	Time
May	26 Thurs	Planning Advisory Group	Cheese & Grain Room 3	18:00
Jun	15 Wed	Council Co ordination	TBC	19:00
Jun	16 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	TBC	18:00
Jul	13 Wed	Council	TBC	19:00
Jul	27 Wed	Town Matters	TBC	19:00
Jul	28 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	TBC	18:00
Aug	24 Wed	Council Co ordination	Assembly Rooms	19:00
Sept	8 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	TBC	18:00
Sept	21 Wed	Council	TBC	19:00
Sept	28 Wed	Town Matters	TBC	19:00
Oct	20 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	TBC	18:00
Oct	26 Wed	Council Co ordination	Rook Lane Chapel	19:00
Nov	30 Wed	Town Matters	TBC	19:00
Dec	1 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	TBC	18:00
Dec	7 Wed	Council	TBC	19:00
Jan	11 Wed	Council Co ordination	TBC	19:00
Jan	25 Wed	Council	Selwood Academy	19:00
Jan	26 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	TBC	18:00
Feb	22 Wed	Town Matters	Frome Town Hall	19:00
Mar	8 Wed	Council	Frome Town Hall	19:00
Mar	9 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	Frome Town Hall	18:00
Apr	5 Wed	Annual Town Meeting*	Frome Town Hall	19:00
Apr	12 Wed	Council Co ordination	Frome Town Hall	19:00
Apr	20 Thur	Planning Advisory Group	Frome Town Hall	18:00
May	10 Wed	Town Matters	Frome Town Hall	19:00
May	24 Wed	Council (Annual Meeting)	Frome Town Hall	19:00
*not a Council meeting				

Council meetings will now be held roughly every other month with the exceptions of November, December and January where there will be a meeting each month to allow for discussions and approval of the budget and work programme. There will be a meeting of

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one of the two committees each month and the Planning Advisory Group will now meet every six weeks instead of three.

In total, there will be six Council meetings, five meetings of each committee and eight Planning Advisory Group meetings.

### *Recommendation*

Agree the calendar of meetings for 2016/17.

#### **12. For information: Project update**

The Project update is at Appendix 3.

#### **13. For decision: Banking, financial overview and investments**

Author: Jackie Wheeler, Responsible Finance Officer

### *Day to day banking*

In February, the Council lost the presence of a town centre bank in Frome when the current account was transferred to Warminster following the division of Lloyds and TSB. We have no facility to deposit or withdraw cash and so currently staff travel to Warminster to do this which is wasteful. It was agreed with Cllrs Sheila Gore and Toby Eliot, as finance project sponsors, to find an alternative alongside a review of our investments opportunities.

Out of the 19 banks and building societies contacted only Nat West, HSBC, Barclays and TSB could offer the day to day banking facilities that FTC requires including direct access to a branch in Frome. I discussed with Sheila and Toby administration charges, online banking, set up costs, ethical considerations and their involvement in local community fundraising. The Ethical Matrix was applied for each bank at branch level, not corporately.

Taking all these factors into consideration it is proposed to change the day to day banking from Lloyds to Barclays for the following reasons; Barclays have a set monthly account fee which was lowest of the banks, with no additional charge for individual transaction, unlike the other three. Barclays offered on site training to enable a smooth transition to integrate the Council's accounts software into their online banking system, which wasn't openly offered by the other banks, Barclay's fundraising was more locally based, supporting Frome charities including Fair Frome, Frome Collegians and Frome Badminton Club and they were keen to work with the Council and get involved in local grant funding. Whilst the other banks did fundraise and worked as volunteers in the community, it was elsewhere in the county.

Barclays were the only bank to contact me following our meeting showing interest in having the Council's account.

### *Investments*

The Council has built up considerable reserves in preparation to fund major projects: the renovation of the Town Hall, the Market Place and Saxonvale redevelopment. In addition, we receive the Precept from the District Council in two amounts, April and September; this

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money is to cover six months budget and running costs and sits in General Reserves. We also received the Council Support Tax Grant, which again sits in General Reserves pending a decision on its use.

These reserves are invested to gain maximum interest but need to be short term and accessible. New investment of Town Council funds is limited to three building societies and three banks with the rest uninterested. As a result we have increased our savings with existing investments - Triodos, CCLA and Lloyds - and new investments with the Charity Bank and Co Op. FTC Investment policy and the EDMM were used in deciding these investments.

### *Finance and budget*

A copy of the current year's budget can be found at Appendix 4. The new layout reflects the three pillars in the Strategic Plan and the annual work programme. It is worth reminding Cllrs that the budget was set with the inclusion of the proceeds of the sale of Palmer Street estimated at £230k. The advice from local estate agents is that Palmer Street should be put on the market once it is empty following the move to Frome Town Hall.

The amount that is kept in the General Reserve for emergencies. The advice from Government is that this amount should be between three and six months running costs. Up to now this has roughly been between £180k and £360k. Council has agreed in the past that the GR will be £180k. Monthly running costs have risen this year because we pay business rates and utility bills for Frome Town Hall as well as for Palmers Street. I am reviewing these costs and will bring this back to a future Council meeting if Cllrs need to consider increasing the size of the GR.

In the year ahead, there are some big projects that we are involved in, (notably Frome Town Hall and the regeneration projects at Saxonvale and Market Place), monitoring expenditure on these and making sure there are sufficient funds to complete them is a high priority. This is made more difficult because, at this stage, we do are not clear about the amounts we will need to complete each project. As a result, I suggest we think carefully about starting new projects until, at least, Frome Town Hall is up and running.

### *Recommendations*

1. Change the day to day banking to Barclays Frome branch.
2. Note the investments and finance update.

#### **14. For decision: Agree the Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2016 and Earmarked reserves**

Author: Jackie Wheeler, Responsible Finance Officer

### *Purpose of the report*

To agree the governance and accounting statements on the Annual Return for the financial year 2015/16 at Appendix 5 and confirm there is a sound system of internal control in place and that they present fairly the financial position of Frome Town Council.

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

## *making Frome a better place*

If any Cllrs require clarification on any element of the Annual Return, please contact me.

### *Background*

Every Town Council in England with an annual turnover of £6.5 million or less must complete an Annual Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with proper practices and must approve each section and submit for external audit by 30 June 2016. It is designed to provide an independent check on how the council operates, and confirms it has proper arrangements in place and accepted responsibility for safeguarding public money.

### *Section 1 Annual governance statement*

This section of the Annual Return considers whether FTC is complying with proper practice and effective financial management. Box 9 asks Cllrs whether the Council has met all of its responsibilities as the sole managing trustee.

I can confirm that this is the case and recommend that Cllrs request that the Mayor and the Town Clerk signs the box at the bottom of the page accordingly.

### *Section 2 Accounting statements 2015/16*

This section compares income and expenditure during the previous two financial years, 2014/15 and 2015/16. Boxes 1 – 10 identify any increases compared with the year before.

I have to explain to the External Auditor any significant increases (i.e. more than 15 %) year on year. Virtually all of the significant increases relate to the purchase of the Town Hall and the Old Showfield.

These are in:

Box 3. We took out two Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans for the purchase and renovation of the Town Hall and the purchase of the Old Showfield.

Box 4. In 2014/15 we contracted out a large portion of staff costs to agency staff. This was necessary due to staff shortages.

Box 5. This increase was due to the PWLB repayments starting for the Town Hall.

Box 6. We increased our expenditure due to the purchase of the Town Hall and the Old Showfield.

Box 9. Our fixed assets increased with the ownership of the Town Hall and the Old Showfield. In addition, we have been told by the External Auditors that the value of existing land needs to be reported as at the original purchase price.

Box 10. Total borrowings have increased due to the two PWLB loans taken out in 15/16, for the Town Hall and the Old Showfield.

The Annual Return has been signed off by the Internal Auditors and their report is at Appendix 6.

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Proposed Frome Town Council Earmarked and General Reserves as at 31 March 2016			
		£	
9003	Elections	12,311	2019 district and town elections
9004	Market Regeneration	575	Market Regeneration
9010	Play Equipment	23,894	Play equipment replacement
9011	Office relocation	444,101	Renovation of Frome Town Hall and Town Council relocation (includes PWLB balance)
9017	S106 Funding	122,599	(£65k) Foundry Barton & Riverside area (£44k) Old Showfield improvements (£7.5k) Old Showfield adult fitness equipment (£6k) Youth shelter
9020	Town Centre Improvements	298,865	Market Place phase #2
9021	The Dippy	12,606	The Dippy enhancement
9022	Fair Frome	141	Funding balance financing mobile phone contract 16/17
9023	Youth & FE training	20,682	(13.4k) Frome College Apprenticeship coordinator yr2 of 2 (£7.2k) FTC Project Assistant funding for 6mths
9039	River Corridor	18,013	River strategy and enhancement
9051	Neighbourhood Plan	27,543	(£12.5k) Employment Land Study (£15k) Referendum
9053	Trees	6,456	Tree surveys on Council owned land
9054	Open Spaces	10,153	Including Cheese Field/ Millennium Green and Rodden Meadow
9056	Saxonvale	110,446	Enable development of Saxonvale area
	General Reserves	249,002	Includes provision for £13.5k 15/16 outstanding commitments

### *Reserves*

The General Reserve at the end of the financial year stands at £235k which although is £55k over and above the agreed minimum £180k. At this stage, I do not recommend allocating this £55k for anything until, at least the Frome Town Hall project is. The proposed Earmarked Reserves position as at 31/03/2016 can be seen below:

Earmarked Reserves have been expended during the course of the financial year, and the Council budgeted in 2015/16 to 'top up' certain EMRs for specific projects requiring significant expenditure. There are no new EMRs proposed.

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Overall, the financial position of the Council is in good shape and with the major projects on the horizon, namely the Town Hall renovation, the Market Place and Saxonvale redevelopment; the Council continues to be very active in investing in the town.

## *Recommendations*

Approve the Annual Return for year ended 31 March 2016 and instruct the Mayor to sign the following parts on behalf of Council:

1. *Section 1 Annual Governance Statement* that, to the best of their knowledge, the Council has ensured there is a sound system of internal control including the preparation of the accounting statements in place and boxes 1 – 9 are ticked to agree yes to the statements.
  2. *Section 2 Accounting Statements* to certify that the accounting statements fairly present the financial position of Frome Town Council at the end of the financial year 2015/16.
  3. Agree the Earmarked Reserves position as at 31/03/2016.
  4. Note that the Internal Auditors report which approves the 15/16 final accounts and the sign off of the Internal Audit section of the Annual Return.
- 15. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 13 July 2016, venue to be confirmed.**