

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

*making Frome a better place*

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Matters Committee

Wednesday 15 June 2016 at 7pm  
Saxonvale Centre, Garsdale, Frome BA11 1RZ

Present:

Councillors: Jean Boulton, Toby Eliot, Pippa Goldfinger, Tim O'Connor, Mel Usher

In attendance:

Richard Ackroyd, Peter Macfadyen, Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Jackie Wheeler (Responsible Finance Officer), Chris Stringer (Environment Manager), Laura Poulton (Democratic Services Administrator)

4 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2016/1/CM	<p>The meeting started at 7.02pm</p> <p><b>1. Elect the Chair and Vice Chair</b> Pippa Goldfinger proposed Jean Boulton as Chair, seconded by Toby Eliot, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Jean Boulton proposed Tim O'Connor as Vice Chair, seconded by Mel Usher, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2016/2/CM	<p><b>2. How committee meetings will run</b> Tim O'Connor explained that the committee meetings would be fairly informal and with a chance for discussion around each of the items.</p> <p>Jean Boulton proposed a change to the name of the committee from Council Co-ordination Committee to Council Matters, seconded by Toby Eliot, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2016/3/CM	<p><b>3. Remit of the committee</b> Tim O'Connor explained that the Council Matters Committee would be responsible for matters pertaining to the running of the Town Council and its estate - specifically for decisions in HR, Health &amp; Safety, Finance, auditing, IT, processes of marketing &amp; communication, land holdings, Town Hall, work of the environment team and grants.</p>	
2016/4/CM	<p><b>4a. Apologies for absence</b> Received from Kate Bielby, Gary Collinson, Sheila Gore and Nick White.</p> <p><b>4b. Declaration of members' interests</b></p>	

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	None was received.	
2016/5/CM	<p><b>5. Questions and comments from the public</b></p> <p>Margaret Merrill asked who was responsible for keeping the footpath linking Somerset Road and Park Road clean. Chris Stringer noted it was FTC’s responsibility and would ask the Ranger team to monitor the area closer. Margaret also asked when the zip wire would be reinstalled and when the slide would be repaired in Mary Baily. Chris Stringer explained that his team were currently working on the zip wire and the slide, which had been vandalised, would be repaired once the part from Sweden had arrived.</p> <p>Margaret also enquired why some of the flowers and plants had been bought outside of Frome. Chris Stringer noted that the team use a variety of garden centres depending on what the requirements are and the value for money, however some had been purchased from Minty’s in Frome.</p> <p>Chris Stringer gave a health and safety update and noted that one of the Rangers had cut his leg and required stitches.</p>	
2016/6/CM	<p><b>6. Update on the Frome Town Hall project</b></p> <p>Paul Wynne noted that all the exterior repairs had been completed. Paul explained that a builder had been chosen from a shortlist to complete the interior refurbishment and they were currently finalising the contract. He noted that their bid came under FTC’s budget.</p> <p>Paul explained that the next steps for the project were to sign off the building contract and recruit a Marketing and Town Hall Manager and caretaker for the building, and establish a trust which would own the building for the community and therefore protect it from sale in the future.</p> <p>Pippa Goldfinger suggested that FTC could explore the option of businesses in the town renting some of the rooms. She also suggested finding out what the demand for hot desking is within the town to understand how better to utilise the space.</p> <p>Mel Usher noted that a date should be set for when FTC need to know from potential other tenants if they would commit to moving into the building.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the option for taxing Frome Town Hall and agreed that it would be the best option so that VAT could be reclaimed.</p>	<p>PWY</p> <p>PWY</p> <p>PWY</p> <p>JW</p>

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	<p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the report</li> <li>2. Apply to HM Revenue and Customs notifying of an option to tax Frome Town Hall and land excluding the Elliot building</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Toby Eliot, seconded by Tim O'Connor, agreed unanimously.</p>	<b>JW</b>
<b>2016/7/CM</b>	<p><b>7. Update on various financial matters for information</b></p> <p>Jackie Wheeler explained what the Council tax support grant was and how FTC had received it in the past. She noted that as of 2017 MDC would no longer be passing the grant onto FTC.</p> <p>Discussion focused around whether or not to challenge the decision by MDC. Cllrs agreed this would not be beneficial at this time. Mel Usher suggested that Paul Wynne in collaboration with Toby Eliot, Jean Boulton and Jackie Wheeler write to the MDC Chief Executive and request that the annual Council Tax letter to residents should include an explanation of the council tax support grant and details of special expenses. A date by which a reply is expected from MDC should be included.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed at what level general reserves should be kept. Cllrs decided that there would be no changes to the minimum agreed level of £180k.</p>	<b>PWy</b>
<b>2016/8/CM</b>	<p><b>8. Update on the roles and responsibilities of the Council's staff</b></p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
<b>2016/9/CM</b>	<p><b>9. A short pictorial presentation on some of the work that is happening on FTC's open spaces</b></p> <p>Chris Stringer gave a pictorial update on current work on open spaces and work that was planned for the future.</p> <p>Mel Usher asked if more planting could be done at Rodden Meadow. Pippa Goldfinger suggested mowing temporary football pitches at Rodden Meadow for the summer holidays.</p> <p>Discussion focused on options for maintenance of small verges around the town. Chris Stringer suggested that FTC could work with residents to take on the spaces and maintain them how they would like. Cllrs asked Chris to speak with MDC to find out if it was possible to transfer these areas to FTC.</p>	<b>CS</b>          <b>CS</b>
<b>2016/10/CM</b>	<p><b>10. Review of how the meeting went</b></p>	

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	Mel Usher requested that at a future meeting there be a discussion around FTC's use of social media, marketing etc.  Toby Eliot and Richard Ackroyd noted that the agenda looked good and was the right length in terms of items and reports.	<b>PWy</b>
<b>2016/11/CM</b>	<b>The next meeting will be at 7pm on 24 August 2016 at the Assembly Rooms.</b>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.43pm

DRAFT