

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 8 March 2017 at 7pm
Rook Lane Chapel, Bath Street, Frome BA11 1DN

Present:

Councillors: Richard Ackroyd, Kate Bielby, Jean Boulton, Colin Cobb, Gary Collinson, Toby Eliot, Pippa Goldfinger, Peter Macfadyen, Al O'Kane, Mel Usher, Nick White

In attendance:

Geoffrey Wheating, Bob Montgomery (Longleat Enterprises), Sam Blanchard (Frome Times), James Wood (Frome Standard), Des Harris, Adam Boyden, Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development and Regeneration Manager) Laura Flaherty (Democratic Services Administrator)

16 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2017/7/FC	<p>3. A presentation from Bob Montgomery and Geoffrey Wheating, Longleat Enterprises Ltd</p> <p>Geoffrey explained that Longleat employed 19% of its staff from Frome making it the biggest employer for the town. Staff at Longleat come from twenty-four different postal code areas. In recent times Longleat has become a twelve-month employer as it no longer closes during the winter months.</p> <p>Geoffrey explained that in the last three years Longleat had focused on an event led strategy which ultimately has the least impact on the heritage of Longleat.</p> <p>Geoffrey noted that last year's expenditure from visitors was £115 million. 40 % of visitors drive from 2 hours away and 300, 000 stay overnight. Longleat recorded 1 million visitors last year, making it the most valuable attraction in the region.</p> <p>Bob explained that Longleat had submitted an outline planning application to construct a 240-room hotel with adjoining water park. Bob explained that the aim for Longleat was to become a tourism hub and having a hotel could make them an access point to other attractions in the region. Ultimately, the increase in profits from the addition of a hotel would be put back into the restoration of Longleat House and other heritage assets.</p> <p>Jean Boulton asked if they had considered staff subsidies for transport? Bob explained that they were investigating transport options for staff in a similar way to Center Parcs. However, they were open into looking at other transport options for visitors.</p>	

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	<p>Mel Usher noted FTC would be interested in working with Longleat to help support apprenticeships and traineeships.</p> <p>Richard Ackroyd asked if they had considered more cycle and footpaths? Geoffrey explained that they were exploring more ways of enabling staff to walk and cycle to work.</p>	PWh
2017/8/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7.39pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Ali Barclay, Tricia Golinski, Sheila Gore and Nick White.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 25 January 2017 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 25 January 2017 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Jean Boulton, seconded by Colin Cobb, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2017/9/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs A member of the public requested the Council helped to resolve the appalling state of the old toilet block in Cork Street. Des Harris, MDC Cllr, noted he would make some further investigations with MDC as the owners of the toilet block and report back. Mel Usher asked the Town Clerk to write to the Chief Executive of MDC to ensure that in the short term they make the toilet block safe and sanitary.</p>	PWy
2017/10/FC	<p>4. For decision: Next steps on Market Place Remodelling Peter Wheelhouse explained that momentum was being achieved to implement change and improvements in the Market Place. Peter noted that the first element of the project was the redevelopment of the area by Boyle Cross. He explained that MDC, as the landowner, had asked for FTC to consult with the surrounding parishes, a meeting had been set for 29 March.</p> <p>Peter explained that the remodelling of the Market Place would include; a gateway to indicate a zomph zone, a crossing point at the bottom of Bath Street, relocating the police bay to the bottom of Boyle Cross, improvements to the paved area at the bottom of Stoney Street, removing the railings at the entrance to Cork Street, an enhanced build out for crossing outside of the George Hotel, widening the bus bays and turning the current pelican</p>	

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	<p>crossing (outside of Iceland) into a puffin crossing which has features to help those with disabilities and visual impairments.</p> <p>Pippa Goldfinger asked that thought was given to signage to ensure that the Market Place was not cluttered.</p> <p>Richard Ackroyd asked whether a cycle path could be added. Peter noted he would look into the possibility.</p> <p>Des Harris asked if a zomph is enforceable? Peter explained that it would be for the zone rather than a permitted speed limit, however, having a zomph zone had been shown to encourage drivers to reduce their speed.</p> <p>Margaret Merrill asked how the bus bays would be widened? Peter explained that there would be a reduction in the width of the pavement within the regulations permitted by Highways. There would be no impact to the businesses.</p> <p>Charles Wood asked if the market traders would be moved from the Boyle Cross area. Peter explained that they would not and that the market traders had been consulted throughout the whole process. The area would be improved for them, giving them a level surface, a power supply and bollards that can be moved to allow van access.</p> <p>Jean Boulton thanked Peter and the team for their work on the project so far and felt the remodelling project would make the area safer and more attractive.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That delegated authority be granted to the EDRM in consultation with Cllr Mel Usher as Project Sponsor to continue negotiations with MDC and SCC to secure commitments that will enable Market Place remodelling to proceed 2. That a report is brought back to Council to report on the outcome of these negotiations and the costs of the scheme prior to a decision being taken to commit to implementation <p>Proposed by Richard Ackroyd, seconded by Pippa Goldfinger, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWh</p> <p>PWh</p> <p>PWh</p>
<p>2017/11/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision: Bringing forward development of land at Saxonvale</p> <p>In 2016 FTC undertook a survey amongst businesses in Frome to ascertain the demand for work space in the town. Peter Wheelhouse explained that the report was almost complete and</p>	<p>PWh</p>

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	<p>that already a clear need had been identified for an additional 30,000 sqft. of work space.</p> <p>FTC owns a parcel of land on the Saxonvale site where the FETE building is located. Peter explained that the recommendations in the report were to move forward with how FTC develop this piece of land. The main recommendation was for FTC to identify a joint venture with the potential for a mixed-use development with an emphasis on work space.</p> <p>There followed a discussion around: what are the alternatives to FTC exploring the development of its own land at Saxonvale only?</p> <p>Table 1 said what have we got to lose. They felt that FTC shouldn't keep waiting for all landowners to agree on a cohesive development. They felt the development of FTC land should be of high density.</p> <p>Table 2 felt there should be a focus on business and employment use. However, a mixed-use development could be beneficial.</p> <p>Table 3 felt the land should be developed for commercial use.</p> <p>Table 4 felt it was important to have the right strategy in place.</p> <p>The second question was: if we do decide to proceed as recommended, what mix of uses is appropriate?</p> <p>Table 1 felt FTC should retain control over the development and ensure it provides future income.</p> <p>Table 2 felt FTC should lead by example and a mixed-use development comprising of shops, offices and residential would be good.</p> <p>Table 3 felt FTC might need to consider some residential element to attract the right developer. They also suggested the FETE building could be developed into a more comprehensive training site.</p> <p>Peter summarised the feedback from the participants in the room. He understood that FTC should take a lead to develop the site, a mixed-use site was one to pursue with a greater proportion of work space than a usual mixed use development. Peter noted that FTC needed to take into account the needs for a training site.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Delegated authority be granted to the EDRM in consultation with Cllrs Mel Usher and Colin Cobb to:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Appoint an agent that can work with FTC to identify a potential joint venture (JV) partner to develop the Council's land at Saxonvale. The emphasis would be on delivering	
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	<p>workspace but the Council should also explore the potential for a mixed-use development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Take legal advice on the form of any JV agreement c. Have informal discussions with current tenants regarding their future plans d. Explore the opportunities to raise external finance and approach the County and District Councils to secure their support e. Use the Saxonvale EMR to fund the above work – it is anticipated that the cost would not exceed £25k f. Report back to Council on the outcomes before any joint venture agreement is entered into <p>2. That the Town Council considers the Saxonvale site to be unsafe, dangerous and unsightly. That the Town Clerk writes to Mendip District Council requesting it uses planning and other powers (not available to FTC) to force the various owners of the Saxonvale site to make their buildings and land safe, sound and tidy.</p> <p>Proposed by Pippa Goldfinger, seconded by Kate Bielby, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PWh</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PWy</p>
<p>2017/12/FC</p>	<p>6. The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 24 May 2017 at Frome Town Hall</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm