

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Matters Committee

Wednesday 14 June 2017 at 7pm

Frome Town Hall, Christchurch Street West, Frome BA11 1EB

Present:

Councillors: Richard Ackroyd, Ali Barclay, Jean Boulton, Toby Eliot, Tricia Golinski, Sheila Gore, Mel Usher

In attendance:

Cllr Tom Killen (Deputy Leader of MDC), Cllr John Clarke (SCC), Gary Collinson (FTC), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development and Regeneration Manager), Anna Francis (Resilience Manager), Cara Naden (Community Projects Officer), Charlie Orr (Project Officer), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communication Manager, Interim), Nicola Cretney (Health and Wellbeing Manager), Laura Flaherty (Democratic Services Administrator)

7 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2017/21/TM	<p>A minute's silence was held for those affected by the fire at Grenfell House in London.</p> <p>The meeting started at 7.02pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Peter Macfadyen and Nick White</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 10 May 2017 The minutes of the Town Matters Committee meeting held on 10 May 2017 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Jean Boulton, seconded by Mel Usher, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2017/22/TM	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs None were received</p>	
2017/23/TM	<p>3. For decision – Themed Town Matters committee agendas for 2017/18 Paul Wynne explained that the remit of the committee was broad, so the proposal was to have themed items at each meeting.</p>	

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	<p>The recommendation was to adopt the thematic approach to future Committee meetings.</p> <p>Proposed by Jean Boulton, seconded by Tricia Golinski, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2017/24/TM</p>	<p>4. For information & discussion – Update on economic development work</p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse explained that although FTC’s work was about supporting the economy it was also about social wellbeing and environmental sustainability. This had been reflected in engagement with the business community.</p> <p>Peter noted that there were not enough jobs in Frome with a forecast demand for an additional 2700 jobs by 2028. He explained that Frome hosted many micro businesses (less than 10 employees) which, if supported to expand, could help meet local needs. There was a growing need for employment land and new business premises to enable growing businesses to stay in the town and to attract new businesses as well as creating more training and apprenticeship opportunities for local people.</p> <p>Peter explained there were many projects in our current work programme that could help to meet these needs. These included creating office space on FTC’s land at Saxonvale, improvements to the public realm in Market Place, supporting the Media Centre at the Cheese and Grain, promoting the conversion of redundant space above shops for business space, new way finding signage between the station and town centre, improving the availability of visitor information, exploring the possibility of a business improvement district, the Good Business Framework project (to celebrate and encourage green and ethical business activity), preparing young people for work with the apprenticeship coordinator at Frome College, links with universities and developing a community of businesses through the Frome Business Breakfast and Discuss & Do programmes.</p> <p>Mel Usher said we should be keeping an eye on radical developments by looking further ahead and identifying trends in changing employment needs. For example, he said that at some point in the future, low paid jobs would become more automated and local people would struggle to find work.</p> <p>Neil Howlett, from the Frome Chamber of Commerce thanked Peter and FTC for their engagement with the Chamber. He noted that the</p>	

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	<p>MDC 2005 employment study looked like it could have been written today. He explained that market towns were well placed to deal with changes in the market and that there were increasing numbers of highly skilled people working in Frome who needn't go into the city anymore.</p> <p>Tom Killen, portfolio holder for economic development at MDC, introduced the Mendip Economic Development Strategy for 2017 – 2020 which was launched for consultation. Tom explained that Mendip was becoming a desired destination for businesses and that MDC were supporting businesses in many ways including a dedicated economic planner, investing in the Connecting Devon and Somerset scheme and providing business support through the Enterprise Mendip scheme.</p> <p>Tom explained that the challenges were retaining young people, increasing low wages, rural connectivity and availability of business space. He listed as threats competition for employment land from residential developers, and an increase in automation. He also highlighted the reliance of some businesses on labour from other European countries as a concern in the context of Brexit.</p> <p>He did however note some opportunities which were improving links with higher education institutions and a closer working relationship between MDC and BANES.</p> <p>Mark Brookes asked Tom if there were plans for buses to stop at Commerce Park. Tom said he would look into the possibilities.</p> <p>Neil Howlett thanked MDC for their work and for engaging with the Chamber and FTC. He said he looked forward to town working groups (that Tom proposed).</p> <p>Toby Eliot asked what were the measures of success going to be? Tom said this would be overcoming some of the challenges and threats, creating a more joined up approach, a young workforce and improvements to the quality of life.</p> <p>Charlie Orr gave an overview of the Business Breakfasts and Discuss and Do events. He noted that they were popular events with businesses and a programme had been planned for the year ahead.</p>	
2017/25/TM	5. For decision – Discover Frome information point – Frome Town Centre	

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	<p>Jean Boulton explained that since FTC’s move to the Town Hall people had felt the loss of the Information Centre in the town centre.</p> <p>Rachel Griffin explained that the stats had shown a decline in visitors seen by information staff since the move. A new point called ‘Discover Frome Information Point’ was proposed. This would be based at the Black Swan for a trial period of 3 months. She said it would be manned by volunteers but there would be a telephone point to link back to the Town Hall.</p> <p>The recommendations were that councillors support:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The establishment of the Discover Frome information point at Black Swan Arts for an initial 3-month period and, subject to a successful trial, support its continued operation for at least a further 9-month period subject to funding being provided by Mendip Tourism 2. The installation of a phone ‘hotline’ within the library to enable users of the library to speak to our Customer Service Advisors 3. The further development of the Discover Frome website and the production of an annual guide in partnership with The List that reflects the full Frome offer utilising the approved Marketing budget and funding from Mendip Tourism <p>Proposed by Jean Boulton, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p>	RG/JL
2017/26/TM	<p>6. For information – Towards a more environmentally sustainable town</p> <p>Cara Naden gave a comprehensive overview of the work she had been doing over a period of 7 months while she was covering maternity leave. This included the following projects: supporting businesses to reduce waste by arranging joined up collections in the town centre; a good business audit; promoting the purchase of ethical products; a Green charter; a programme to increase renewable energy; help to local people to reduce fuel poverty; work on creating a more sustainable transport network; setting up a volunteer driver scheme; the development of an all-electric car club with Frome now having the most charging stations in the county; the introduction of electric bikes for hire; and support to the Share Shop and the Community Fridge.</p> <p>Anna Francis, now returned from maternity leave, explained that the future plans were to create a more strategic and smarter approach. She explained that projects such as Clean and Healthy Future and projects around reducing waste and promoting sustainable transport would continue.</p>	

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	Richard Ackroyd congratulated everyone who had been involved in the various projects.	
2017/27/TM	7. For decision – Frome Community Toilet Scheme Review Councillors asked for the report to be brought back to a future Town Matters meeting once all the existing partners of the toilet scheme had been consulted on the proposed changes.	CO/RG
2017/28/TM	8. For decision – Station Approach improvements project Jane Llewellyn explained that there was a £30k s106 budget available for the scheme which included signage, a bus stop, pedestrian route across the forecourt, relocation of the taxi rank and cycle stands. She noted that GWR had already provided the cycle stands and were providing funding for the signage. Jane explained that due to delays in decision making by SCC, scheme costs had gone up and the scheme needed to be amended as a result. It was proposed to remove the bus stop as this had the least impact on the rest of the scheme and at the moment, the station was not on a bus route. Jane noted the footpath would be widened and resurfaced, with a dropped kerb by the pedestrian crossing John Clarke explained that Highways do have some funding for schemes like this. He offered to speak to them to see what could be done to help. The recommendation was that the Station Approach improvements scheme is amended by removing the provision of a bus stop from the scheme to enable the remaining improvements to be delivered within the £30k budget. Proposed by Toby Eliot, seconded by Tricia Golinski, agreed by majority.	JC JL
2017/29/TM	9. For decision – proposed use of s.106 funds Councillors received a proposal to use the s106 budget of £38,213.89 from the development of the former Mendip Lodge Hotel site. The recommendation was to agree the proposed use of s.106 funds to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-fund an intern role that is focused on tourism projects in Frome • Increase promotion of Frome as a destination for walkers and cyclists • Implement town signage improvements 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Changing Places project• Support Frome's Walkers Are Welcome application• Generally, providing better walking & cycling routes around Frome <p>Proposed by Richard Ackroyd, seconded by Jean Boulton, agreed unanimously.</p>	CS
2017/30/TM	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 2 August 2017 at Frome Town Hall	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.57pm