

## Agenda item 3

### For decision - 2018-19 Work Programme six-month review

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#### Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Council Matters Committee on the delivery of the 2018-19 Work Programme for the first 6 months of the year. The report highlights new or previously omitted priorities, priorities that are at risk or not on schedule and priorities not now being taken forward. The report seeks agreement to amendments to the work programme and the deletion of certain actions.

#### Introduction

The work programme for 2018/19 was agreed by Council on 24 January. We are now six months into the year and it's nine months since the work programme was agreed.

Managers use a system of RAG rating (Red / Amber / Green) the priorities within the work programme. The 6-month update of this is included as [Appendix 3.1](#) to this report. Green indicates an action is on track for delivery or is completed, amber means an action is on track for delivery but there are potential issues that could affect this and red means an action is not on track for delivery. The Management Group discusses areas of work where progress is challenging at their monthly meeting and collectively considers potential solutions to this.

Since the work programme was agreed in January, new priorities have emerged or have been recognised as omissions from the work programme or need amending (See Table 1), some areas of work are at risk or not on schedule (See Table 2) and other priorities have been identified as not being appropriate to take forward (See Table 3).

#### Recommendations

1. Agree the additions and amendments to the 2018/19 work programme that are set out in Table 1.
2. Note the actions that are given an 'Amber' rating in the RAG assessment and highlighted in Table 2
3. Remove the actions from 2018/19 work programme that are set out in Table 3.

## Progress to deliver the 2018/19 Work Programme

### 1. ENVIRONMENT

#### 1.1. Introduction

Naturally, there's a lot of work involved in keeping the town's green spaces in good order, with lots of daily, time-sensitive and seasonal work to organise, schedule and complete. Alongside this, there are all the changes and improvements that we love working on. Ranging from little projects (like researching and changing a swing seat), to volunteer sessions (bulb planting, for example) and hard landscaping (for instance the improved paths at the Old Showfield). Additionally, something that we've especially felt and noticed since spring, there is the challenge of changing, variable and sometimes unseasonal weather and ground conditions.

All of which means we've been busy over the last six months; balancing the day to day work with delivering a variety of projects across the town. We've taken on additional responsibilities and interests across the town, including the play and recreation spaces at Chapmans Close, Packsaddle, Tower View and much of the work around the refurbished Market Place (including looking after the town centre fountain).

The Rangers and the Project Officers have worked diligently, and with enthusiasm, flexibility and good humour, to deliver several highlights over the last six months.

#### 1.2. Completed projects and work

- Appointed two new Rangers: Jay Hanton and Josh Quiney
- Updated the Management & Improvement Plans for Victoria Park, Mary Baily, Welshmill, the Roundhouse & North Parade
- Adopted a Management & Improvement Plan for Weylands
- Included more detailed information for all these plans and more recently, included site risk assessments with the plans
- We now have two established volunteer sessions that run throughout the year: one with Critchill school and the other with Discovery – a Somerset-based social enterprise that supports people with learning disabilities, autism, challenging behaviour and complex needs
- Completed path improvements at the Old Showfield and in Victoria Park
- For the second year in a row, an award from Frome in Bloom for the Rangers' seasonal floral displays in the town centre. Including the flowers around the fountain
- The Rangers successfully battled the snow in late March, then the hot, dry and sunny weather all summer, keeping the town's florals alive
- Worked with Lou Miles (the Peculiar Botanist) in designing and planting the town orchard over at the Showfield
- Skatepark improvements
- A variety of play improvements at Welshmill
- Planted up a previously redundant space near Foundry Barton

- Upkeep and maintenance work for the town's fountain

### 1.3. Upcoming projects and work (between now and March 2019)

- Seasonal tree works – led by new Ranger, Josh
- Spending time on the ground at Tower View & Packsaddle - including PB votes to decide how we'll spend £15,000 to improve these spaces
- Continuing to support the Trinity Community Group in their growing aims
- Additional footpath improvements in Victoria Park
- Final touches at the new orchard, including whip planting in November
- Progressing the PB project to deliver a new or extended café incorporating better public toilets in Victoria Park

### 1.4. Projects and work off-track, delayed or behind schedule

- Setting up a 'Steiner Rangers' group. We've run a few ad hoc sessions in Victoria Park and Mary Baily in the past and we had early discussions about a more regular meet-up. But so far this hasn't happened.
- We've also been a bit lax in meeting up with the Allotments Association to a schedule. We'll review this and either make it happen or come up with an alternative approach

## 2. RESILIENCE

### 2.1. Transport

- School Active Travel Challenge was a great success; over 2000 students took part and burnt half a million calories! Active travel increased by 20%. The film of the project ([here](#)) has inspired Greater Manchester City Council to explore setting up a similar programme.
- Electric bikes are now covering all their costs and are being booked out regularly.
- There are now bike pumps and repair kits to have at the Town Hall, Cheese and Grain and La Strada as part of our 'Cyclists are Welcome' programme.
- There are more bus frequent services to Bath now and more stops including Sainsburys in Frome; FavBUG have done a great job lobbying for these services supported by FTC. We are exploring options for other services such as to Westbury station.
- We are continuing to lobby for better rail services and to explore ways to improve facilities at the station.
- Frome Community Cars broke even and was successfully spun out to be managed by Mendip Community Transport.
- There are now 90 members of the car club. Membership is only £1 with £25 free driving credit and no monthly charge (promo code FROME109).

### 2.2. Energy

- Clean Future: we have written to the Prime Minister calling for an urgent shift away from fossil fuels and have a coalition of local groups supporting this call. We held a Zero Carbon Towns event in June to link with other areas to explore ways to reduce carbon emissions. We launched a free zero carbon spreadsheet that can be adapted for other areas. We have printed pledge cards and have a page on our website to encourage people to switch to green energy and ethical banking.
- Warm and Well: We held a popular 'Improve Don't Move' event at the Town Hall in May to showcase ways to refurb homes and reduce carbon. We developed a green directory as part of this which is available at the Town Hall and on-line. We promoted free and discounted insulation in the town and so far, 60 households have enquired or taken up the offer. We held training sessions for Medical Practice staff to highlight the impacts of cold homes and to signpost support. There is now a home health check on our website.

### 2.3. Waste

- Plastic-free: we are working to meet the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Town criteria. We have held several well attended community meetings, screened Plastic Ocean twice and launched <https://www.plasticfreefrome.com/> with a map and directory of local businesses and a plastic free film. A leaflet has also been printed and

was distributed at our plastic-free carnival float (which won first prize in the 'miscellaneous' class!).

- SHARE has a new manager and is now open Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Income is increasing, and the team are organising monthly repair cafes at the Welshmill Hub.
- Community Fridge: we have opened a 'Frome Larder' in an adjacent cubicle at Loop de Loop for items that don't need refrigeration. We are working with Friends of the Mount and Trinity to explore setting up new fridges in both areas. We have had enquires from around the UK and world, including a group from Somalia, who want to set up similar projects.

### 3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Health and Wellbeing area of work has delivered successfully against priorities over the first six months of 2018/19. The following highlights key achievements over that time:

#### 3.1. Young people's mental health

- We started the year exploring the idea of having a young people's mental health connector in Frome. However, following discussion at forums such as the health and wellbeing forum and mental health forum, as well as with partners, it is felt it would be more useful to support young people's general health and the conversation with partners has now turned to considering the potential for a young people's health connections service. Health Connections Mendip are funded to work with over 18s and this is a gap they, and Frome Medical Practice, acknowledge and a service they see the need for. Supporting young people using a health connections type model would lead to earlier interventions, appropriate referrals on to services and the opportunity to highlight the range of opportunities there are for young people in Frome to be active, volunteer or join in. These are gaps that those working with young people often highlight. Work will start this Autumn to develop a resource of services available to young people and their families in Frome. The directory of services for the adult Health Connections Mendip service is a resource that is fundamental to how health connections works, therefore it will be helpful to replicate this for young people.
- We are working with Frome Learning Partnership to explore the potential to develop a Frome programme of Mental Health First Aid training. This would be aimed at schools in the first instance and would include mixed levels of training according to staff need. This would be a substantial programme of training over a period of several years. This idea grew out of an initial plan to support schools with volunteer counselling support, but conversations indicated this wouldn't be easy to manage and instead it would be more helpful for school staff to receive basic mental health awareness training.
- The Young People's Mental Health Forum took place in April, June and September. These meetings are well attended and valued by members. Guest speakers this year have included Kooth, an online counselling and wellbeing service that young people in Frome can access, CAMHS (the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), the Frome Learning Partnership, SHARE (School Health and Resilience Education project) and Focus Counselling.

#### 3.2. Healthy lifestyles

- Evidence shows the benefits of physical activity both in terms of physical and mental health, but for some people who may be more vulnerable, whether that's due to their age, income or physical or mental health, being active can be more challenging. Increasing physical activity amongst more vulnerable groups is an area of work that is evolving in Frome, but two projects are starting to address this area and further projects are being discussed.
  - School gate running – this project aims to engage with parents after school drop off and get them active, but also links with people who live in the community

local to the school. These sessions are free. The aim is to make them sustainable by encouraging someone from within the group to undergo run leader training and be able to lead the runs in future themselves. The first school gate running project is underway at Vallis First School, with numbers attending growing week on week at the time of writing. Those joining the sessions are doing so for many different and very individual reasons.

- Couch to 5k – led by staff from Frome Medical Practice (GP, mental health nurse and health connector) which makes this a particularly good group for anyone with mental health or other health conditions they want support for.
- The Old Showfield outdoor gym sessions that took place in the summer were attended by 22 people. The sessions were well received and have given people, the majority of whom hadn't used the gym before, the confidence to now attend regularly. As a result of the evaluation of the summer sessions, further Autumn sessions took place during September and October, four in the daytime and two in the evening. At the time of writing 21 people have attended these.
- We have been working with national charity Tennis For Free and Frome Selwood Tennis Club to open up the community tennis courts for free use. We applied to Tennis For Free to secure funding for coach time to enable regular sessions to happen. These now take place on a Saturday from 2.30-4.00, with further additional sessions available through the week (Monday to Friday, 3.30-5.00.) This means 19.5 hours of free court time is now available each week. The start of Tennis for Free has been successful with 83 people attending the launch session and a total of 164 people attending the first 3 sessions in September.
- The number of Couch to 5k and improvers running group in Frome is growing. Some of these we support with funding (which means they are free to attend) but others are paid for by participants. We have been working with various groups on this, to continue building on what is offered and to link to other support available to people wanting to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Mayhem in the Meadow took place in May 2018 on a scorching hot day and was well attended, with lots of different activities on offer.

### 3.3. Literacy

- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes are being delivered by Frome Community Education and take place twice a week (at different times) during term time (over three terms).
- Frome Community Education continue to provide the IT Hub at the Cheese and Grain two mornings a week, providing IT support as well as literacy support.
- Frome Reads pop up has been taken to many events over the first 6 months of the year by Purple Elephant, include Mayhem in the Meadow and the Children's Festival.

### 3.4. General health and wellbeing

- Health and Wellbeing Forums were held in April and September. Both were well attended and received positive feedback. The forums provide an opportunity to update people on work we've been doing on health and wellbeing. The April meeting took a focus on food in Frome, exploring work taking place linked to food and

successful projects elsewhere. The September meeting reviewed current and future priorities / issues facing Frome.

- The Sports Forum Action Plan has been updated and is currently in draft form, ready to be discussed at the next Forum meeting in November.
- Health and wellbeing messages are communicated widely. The 4 weekly radio show on Frome FM features a mix of town council updates and partner interviews. The marketing and communications team have generated numerous press releases and social media posts. The health and wellbeing section of the town council website has significantly grown and includes pages on both forums, as well as topics such as running, walking, the outdoor gym and tennis, for example.

### 3.5. Support for Community Groups

We have continued to support community organisations through a range of mechanisms:

- The Mayor's and Community Grants: both have been reviewed and revised in 2018 to ensure that funding is administered effectively with an emphasis on creating financially sustainable projects, with support for new and emerging organisations that might not qualify for other funding streams.
- A training programme for community groups: this rolling programme of training includes practical courses such as first aid and risk assessment alongside the role of a trustee, marketing and communication, business planning and creating a fundraising case for support.
- Volunteer Frome: was initiated to engage a wider demographic in volunteering and to provide a simple way of communicating with local volunteers and potential volunteers. This year SPARK, who deliver the contract, have added value to the original objectives with additional funding and a focus on young people. We will be reviewing the objectives and outcomes of the contract in the forthcoming monitoring meeting to inform the project delivery in year 3.
- Fundraising support and advice: the triage system continues to provide an effective way to ensure that organisations referred for fundraising support are 'grant ready'. Several organisations have been referred to our contracted fundraising advisor and she has supported others through bespoke training as part of the training programme.
- A shed full of resources: we have continued to build the bank of resources available to community groups and organisations and now take regular bookings for items such as gazebos, litter pickers, hot water flasks, tables and chairs, which are available free for community organisations to use
- Responsive support for Community organisations: this is an ever-growing area of our work and we have worked with 25 individuals and organisations since April 2018.
- Facilitation for boards of trustees: this growing area of work has been developed to support organisations, providing a clear format for them to create a shared vision, clear and achievable outcomes and sustainable development plans.

Groups often come to us for advice and support on fundraising, but through the triage system we establish that there are often significant, underlying issues and or other support needs. Through bespoke one to one advice and support organisations are supported to identify these needs and consider a range of methods and tools that the organisation can



put in place to address them, including a template case for support, links to policies and procedures and access to the training programme.

In addition to requests for support from existing organisations, we are receiving an increasing number of enquiries from groups and individuals looking to initiate new community projects in Frome. The support they then receive is often by way of match making, encouraging partnership working, linking with existing projects and organisations and where possible encouraging peer to peer support and advice.

We have found that we are well placed to provide a strategic overview and to take on a coordination role bringing groups together around a common theme. For example, we recently recognised a rise in the number of local artists looking to develop community projects and secure funding for these. We encouraged them to attend the recent Arts Forum meeting where we created space for them to meet and start to look at how they might all come together to work with an existing organisation or create a new one, resulting in fundraising advice and support through one main contact rather than 15 individuals. We anticipate that the resulting projects will now be coordinated and reach wider audiences delivering a greater offer for Frome residents.

In recent months we have also seen a shift in requests from 'nice to do' projects to those which address significant issues, with an increase in statutory organisations looking for support to sustain existing interventions and / or to create new ones which will support them to deliver the services they are primarily funded to deliver.

### 3.6. Community development

In April 2018 we embarked on a new area of work and began to pilot a community development project in the Trinity area of Frome. The project is based on an asset-based approach, building on the skills within and needs of individual communities, through a supportive and facilitative approach. Underpinning this model is the ethos that we enable the community to build projects for themselves.

Whilst developing trusting relationships in the Trinity area, we have supported the community to develop and deliver several projects and initiatives with several local partners:

- Litter Campaign: 3 community litter picks and the installation of two new bins.
- Street Party: supported by the Toy Library, Vallis School, Frome FM, Child's Play, local councillors and sponsored by several local businesses, Trinity Community Group hosted a street party in Milk Street with food, music and a range of activities for residents.
- Junk Gardening: in a bid to engage residents in improving the physical space in the area, recycling a range of receptacles including wellie boots, old flower pots and used car tyres as coloured planters. Now we have demonstrated longevity and a lack of vandalism the school are embarking on more and Live West (formerly Knightstone Housing Association) are looking to develop new gardening projects.

Through an ongoing dialogue, residents have raised concerns about a sharp rise in arson attacks, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and rubbish. There is a sense that there is little point in starting new projects as they will not last and that the statutory services should do more. The community group has been supported by FTC to convene a public meeting with the police and other services to raise these issues and consider positive ways forward.

Support for other emerging community groups: over the last six months several other neighbourhood groups have come together to deliver street parties, apple days and other events. Many have received advice and support on insurance, road closures and have borrowed our community resources.

### 3.7. Project work

Both the support for organisations and community development work have highlighted common areas of concern in Frome which have developed into wider projects, many of these have been addressed in other areas of this report for example, 'Rubbish' initiatives, a bursary fund and Saturday music project.

Other current project work includes support for:

- An Emergency Cold Weather Shelter
- Anti-Bullying March and friendly neighbourhoods' campaign
- Positive interventions for young people

## 4. PROSPERITY

### 4.1. Planning & Development

Since January, the Planning Advisory Group has been consulted on 200 planning applications ranging from works to trees to shipping containers in the Market Yard. We have seen good attendance at the planning meetings and lots of lively debate. Pre-application discussions with developers and householders are also held at the meetings.

Issues continue around car parking charges and on street parking. Unfortunately, parking charges have now increased but there was some success with a concession for the Independent Market following lobbying and the presentation of a petition against the introduction of Sunday charging.

Requests for double yellow lines, speed restrictions and ways to resolve residents parking issues are an ongoing discussion with SCC, however the 20mph limit through the Market Place is due to be implemented by the end of November.

General enquiries for help and advice on planning matters continue to increase from residents and businesses.

In preparation for the expected planning applications for Selwood Garden Village and Saxonvale, a brief was prepared looking at how we can take account of the future needs of the town and engage the local community. The brief focused on developing a set of principles that can guide future developments in the town, looking at best practice not only in Frome but elsewhere in the UK and Europe.

The University of the West of England (UWE) offered their support and we are now working with Master of Architect students supported by their tutors. The work will include background research, a public workshop and a place/life study focusing on the Mount area, finishing with a report and public exhibition. The final report is will be presented mid-December.

### 4.2. Saxonvale regeneration

MDC have now acquired the former Notts Industries Pension Fund and Terramond land and this means that there is a better prospect of bringing forward a comprehensive regeneration of the site than for many years. FTC and MDC are in talks regarding how the two authorities can work together. Our position statement has been published. The next step is to develop a plan for how FTC's land can contribute and encourage MDC to engage the community ahead of any planning application.

#### 4.3. Remodelling of the Market Place and town centre improvements

The first phase of Market Place remodelling is now completed and the priority is to get agreement with MDC around how new events can be promoted and put a user friendly process in place for users of the site. A new 20 mph zone is to be implemented before the end of the calendar year. A £50k grant has been secured from SCC to enable FTC's proposed bus stop improvements to be implemented. Good progress is being made in terms of securing County approval for this and other elements of a proposed second phase of Market Place remodelling but we have now heard that planning consent from MDC will also be required. The community will be engaged before any planning application is submitted.

#### 4.4. Support for Business & Enterprise

The annual Town Centre Benchmarking project that compares the town centre's performance with other similar towns has been completed for 2018 and submitted to People & Places. The results of this will be published in April 2019.

The monthly Business Breakfast, Discuss & Do and Soul Traders events continue to be well attended with positive feedback.

Work on the apprenticeship project has got off to a successful start. Work to date includes drop in sessions with Frome College students, the preparation of a list of students and employers looking for apprenticeships and a well-attended Apprenticeship Conference held at the Town Hall with guest speakers from local businesses.

In July, FTC hosted 10 students from Frome College for their work experience week. The students helped with the annual Benchmarking surveys.

For the International Work placements, working with the Twinning Association, placements were arranged for 3 students from Murrhardt with local businesses. We are now in the process of identifying young people from Frome that can take up work experience in Murrhardt supported by our bursary scheme.

Charlie Orr has also moved on from the Council and we have now been joined by Vivienne Whitaker as Project Officer.

## 5. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

### 5.1. Introduction

The Marketing & Communication area of work still being new to the team are now well embedded and as is incumbent on any good comms team has a pretty good handle now on the workings of Frome Town Council allowing for prolific output. We work to deliver projects, events, campaigns and provide high quality communications to support the strategic aims of the Council. Work in the last six months has included the following.

### 5.2. Improving the image of the town through the visitor experience

- Discover Frome Website has been completely reviewed, reordered & reskinned. With increased SEO on the site, the figures speak for themselves; 141K sessions last year represents a 69% increase in traffic to the site with bounce rates also decreasing dramatically, meaning people like what they see when they get there
- Discover Frome Information Point at Black Swan Arts made its first-year milestone—visitor numbers are now at a similar level to pre-Town Hall levels when resident visits are removed. This means that we are meeting the objective of the DFIP. We have a happy band of over 30 volunteers and have successfully introduced a series of Frome branded products to help support the visitor offer. Next steps include a training programme to foster team spirit
- We are trialing a new digital screen in the Information Point and are rolling out the use of an electronic payment system
- This summer we undertook a review of the impact of The Annual, which showed it to be popular with visitors and businesses alike. Work has begun on the 2019 edition.
- To reflect our Walkers are Welcome status, we are working on a new map series and have created a new website—WalkersareWelcomeFrome.org—complete with our series of walks. We are also looking at creating an integrated Bus Map and actively promote e-bikes and Frome Missing links as part of this offer.

### 5.3. Participation and engagement

- The People's Budget events are well on the way to being rolled out with all events on track: the lantern workshops have started; Rare Species are performing all over the town, waiting for their opportunity to do a town centre performance and Fireworks are next up – we are supporting these events and of course promoting our support of them.
- The Town Vote was successful with 767 people voted, with the orchard capturing the imagination and grabbing 81% of the vote. A series of engagement activities supported the adoption of the orchard plan and a planting and celebration event has taken place.
- New engagement work has centred around the litter campaign Bin It for Frome. Following a successful rubbish meeting we now have a series of community-based actions to bring forward and a plan for how to deliver it.

#### 5.4. Increasing the information output of the Council for the purposes of well-being and civic pride

- This has been channeled through the significant increase in social Media output, through a clear and developed digital strategy. Engagement figures are dramatically improved for Facebook and Insta up 55% & 32% respectively. Twitter is the blip but having achieved 55k impressions last year, still very much reaching residents.
- The digital work is reflected in Frome Community website figures which are also up by 20%. Work is continuing to allow for better navigation and improved search function. This work will be completed in the new year.
- Campaigns to increase the profile of the Town Council work programme in interesting creative and innovative ways are numerous and have focused particularly on delivering campaigns around healthy lifestyles for the first half of the year: #activesummer campaign, Tennis for Free, outdoor gym and couch to 5k.
- We continue to shape events and market them. In the last sixth months we have supported Mayhem in the Meadow, Plastic Ocean screenings, Improve Don't Move, Parking in Frome, Frome Children's Festival, Business Breakfasts, Discuss & Do, Apprenticeship conference, Community Groups Training & Apple Day
- We have had success producing films and images; our favorite was the Council Matters Meeting on Tour at Welshmill.
- The Bin It campaign has started in Trinity alongside community development work
- The rebranded and relaunched You're Welcome Scheme has been well received and we now have a network of 12 loos around the town, combined where we can with a refill offer and Walkers are Welcome. It has been very well received and is a feature on the home page of our new Discover Frome website
- Participation in meetings remains a priority - using posters to advertise meetings, actively inviting members of the public. Our commitment to reportage of meetings in an accessible way is a priority. Live streaming remains an outstanding issue.
- Establishing a framework of poster distribution to new and existing community noticeboards has been a success with the addition of four new noticeboards this year and our 3 new volunteer Noticeboard Ambassadors are working well.

#### 5.5. The Performing Arts Panel

- The performing arts panel has had a new iteration in the Frome Arts Forum. We continue to be committed to the performing arts in Frome to acknowledge the important part that is played by Arts in the town. Two main actions are being carried forward from the September meeting following review, which are the exploration of a bursary fund to support access to the arts for young people based on the model of Give It A Go, and the support for a Saturday Morning Music club initiative. The meeting also facilitated a discussion around the emergence of a Community Arts Organisation, so watch this space. The next forum will be held in March.
- Frome Busks, an event that aimed to support businesses whilst providing a performance opportunity for young people was positively received by businesses and shoppers alike; this is due to be repeated in March.

## 5.6. Frome Town Hall Marketing

- The conditions for the Change of Use have now been discharged following the addition of the air conditioning in the council chamber.
- Town Hall Premises license has finally arrived, leaving just the wedding license to make it a hat trick. The arrival of evacuation chairs and training has retriggered that process.
- The work on the collateral is complete, to provide a professional brochure to showcase the Town Hall as a multi-use facility; we need to include wedding information offer which is still under discussion with Somerset County Council.
- A programme of Google ads and banners is ready to go. This will sit alongside a press campaign, the brochure and other cross channel media.
- The Town Hall remains a beautiful offer, where our visitors are well looked after by both our excellent Customer Service Advisers and the Town Hall Steward

## 5.7. Looking forward

- The Eviivo widget made it to the website and without any promotion has already made £180 for Frome businesses in two months by taking commission free bookings. Due to be actively marketed to Frome businesses over the coming months, this will culminate in a visitor conference in February. The hope is that this will lead to greater partnership working within the visitor sector.
- The Singers Trail is due to launch to coincide with the bicentenary of Singers. Written, we are just waiting on the design
- The training has begun for our Frome guides; they will be ready to go in the coming year
- Work on the Christmas event is well under way
- The value added by the marketing team continues as we seek to rapidly respond to the fast pace of reactive work as it comes our way.
- Finally, looking both back and forwards, we have said goodbye to Clem and Claire who, with their differing but complimentary talents, are a hard act to follow but in Laura and the newly recruited Jamie, I have no doubt that our team will continue to go from strength to strength

## 6. FINANCE

### 6.1. Budgets

The budget to 30 September 2018 with an estimated year end forecast to March 2019 will be reported on at Council Matters on 31 October.

### 6.2. Precept

The second half of the 2018/19 Precept was received in September. The provisional tax base (the number of properties liable for council tax) for 2019/20 will be obtained from MDC in December/January, but we will start our start draft budget calculations using a tax base of 8,526 properties, which is an increase of about 100 households over the last year. Our other estimated figure used to build the budget is the Band D equivalent council tax. We are using an inflationary increase of 2.03% (£3.06) to the Band D rate. This would result in a Precept of £1,310,873 (£1,268,273 in 2018/19 + £42,599). These figures are provided just for information at this stage.

### 6.3. Audit

Internal auditors Fair Account visited the Town Hall offices on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October and conducted the audit for the second quarter of 2018/19. Records and procedures in place were approved to provide a good standard of control and there was one formal recommendation:

*The Responsible Finance Officer should hold a general remittance advices tab on a separate file to ensure that all income received can be traced to the Cash Book and to the Town Council bank account which will aid the end of year process when completing the Accountancy and Governance Annual Return (AGAR Part 3).*

### 6.4. Sound Financial Management

We believe our processes comply with the published FTC Financial Regulations and Standing Orders but will also ask the Internal Auditors to pay attention to our procedures at their next audit covering the October to December 2018 quarter in January 2019.

### 6.5. VAT

Quarters ending June and Sept 2018 have been submitted and refunds claimed.

### 6.6. Investments

Our cash balances/reserves of £1.4m at 30 September 2018 are held across seven accounts. I understand it is difficult to find banks to take reserve funds (unless you have an active current account with them) but I shall research for additional deposit/interest bearing accounts as soon as time allows.



## 6.7. Invoicing

Invoices are paid on time, credit control on debtors to be reviewed but low volume of debtors currently (£5,606 at 30<sup>th</sup> September).

## 6.8. Banking

Barclays manager has met with the Finance Team (Sarah and Hannah) earlier in the month and provided excellent support with mandate and card changes. Barclays local charity work contact Kathy Brown has been contacted to provide info on local Barclays charitable activities.

## 6.9. Contracts

All procurement has followed appropriate protocol during September and October to date.

## 6.10. IT

We are considering two options for renewing the server – cash or lease purchase. It is six years old and out of warranty. The current quote for replacing is £8k plus VAT (£4k hardware and £4k configuration). Our IT support company iTEC are now forwarding quotes for leasing a new server over five years, thereby spreading the cost and aiming to renew again at five years. We may also move emails to the cloud on Office 365, leaving just documents/data on a site-based server. I will ask the auditors' advice regarding leasing/purchase, but welcome comments from Councillors.

## 6.11. HR

Ellis Whittam (HR advisors) have continued to be helpful over the past six months and have advised Sarah in what is a new area of work for her.

Six monthly appraisals were completed during September/October 2018 and there are no areas of concern. Our appraisal process will be reviewed and updated in time for March 2019 appraisals.

## 6.12. Bookings

The current bookings software works OK and is accessible to five staff.

## 6.13. Tenants

Two leases need updating on file – Fair Frome and WHY downstairs office. Town Hall is almost at capacity for long term tenants and the Council Chamber will be coming online for event / wedding hire shortly.

#### 6.14. All projects

As the new RFO, I am learning the accounting system (Omega) and processes for Local Government accounting including S106s and EMRs. The records have been excellently kept by Hannah and I have been well supported to date by her as well as having Jackie Wheeler come in for three training sessions of three hours to date.

I am currently working on the Year End forecast which is providing greater detail and understanding of the various projects and activities.

#### 6.15. GDPR

The consultant who provided the report for FTC earlier in the year will be providing her final documents later in the Autumn. We will be revising our processes and filing/storage facilities because of GDPR recommendations and will train both staff and Councillors when the new systems are in place.

Table 1. new priorities added to the work programme, previously omitted from or need amending in the work programme

Area of work	Objective	Action	Explanation
Health and Wellbeing	Young People's Mental Health	AMEND Explore the potential for a young people's health coordinator	See narrative earlier in this document that explains we are now aiming to develop a Young People's Health Connections Service for Frome. Suggest amending this action to reflect this.
Health and Wellbeing	Support for organisations	AMEND Year 2 of 3 MYA with Spark to deliver Volunteer Frome	Spark continue to deliver Volunteer Frome, however this is not a MYA
Health and Wellbeing	Support for organisations	To provide responsive support, triaging and advising community groups through, for example, one to one meetings and facilitation of trustee boards.	This is an area of work that we have delivered over the last few years and its inclusion was omitted from the work programme, but should feature as it's a significant area of work.
Health and Wellbeing	General health and wellbeing	ADD NEW Coordinate a multi-agency forum to highlight key issues across the town and actions to address, similar to the One Team approach happening elsewhere	Mendip already has a One Team and a monthly meeting, attended by Frome agencies but rarely addresses Frome issues. This kind of meeting is felt to be useful by many – including police, education, children's social services and housing. This forum would facilitate agencies to work together across issues, evaluate impact of interventions, share good practice from elsewhere and improve communication between organisations.
Health and Wellbeing	Literacy	ADD NEW Consider strategic measures we can put in place regarding literacy	The impact we can have on literacy levels is limited, however we can raise awareness with key partners (for example, medical practice, library staff, our own customer service advisers) about support that's available to people in Frome who may need help with

			literacy. The cuts being proposed by Somerset County Council could impact on how people access support in the future and we need to be mindful of this and consider potential ways of addressing in the future.
Prosperity	Continue to influence Part 2 of the Mendip Local Plan to ensure that local needs are met	AMEND In response to Selwood Garden Village, FTC working with consultants to lead a process to consider the wider community needs including the need for additional jobs, healthcare and educational facilities, leisure facilities, open space and other community infrastructure. Ensure that, if there is to be additional housing development, the mix of housing types reflect the needs in the town.	In response to the Local Plan Part 2 consultation, a proposal was submitted for Selwood Garden Village. To ensure that Frome develops in a way that meets the needs of the existing as well as future residents and that new development includes the necessary infrastructure throughout the town, it is appropriate that there is an investigation into what those wider needs are. It is also important that the local community should have an opportunity to have their say.
Prosperity	Continue to lead the regeneration of Saxonvale	AMEND The priority is now to work with MDC to explore how a comprehensive mixed-use scheme can be delivered including FTC's land and encourage MDC to engage the community pre-application. FTC's agreed position statement provides the framework for this.	Now that MDC has acquired the former Notts Industries Pension Fund and Terramond land, working with MDC to deliver the comprehensive regeneration of the site has emerged as a new priority.
Resilience	Understand and mitigate against the risks from climate change	AMEND Explore the feasibility of planting trees on a larger scale to remove CO <sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Risk register and action plan developed around the practical actions FTC and	The carbon stored by woodland can reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In the light of the extreme weather such as snow, heat and flooding, which is set to increase over the next decade we need to understand what the risks

		others could take to deal with the impact of extreme weather.	are and what we and other agencies can practically do to minimise impacts to wellbeing and prosperity. We have engaged Trios to advise us on these actions that we and others could take.
Resilience	Increase renewable energy production	Promote solar to roof owners on a large scale	NEW Recruit a team of people to visit local businesses and south facing households / terraces to offer them a range of solar opportunities.
Resilience	NEW Support divestment especially via Somerset Pension Fund	Lobby and support Somerset Pension Fund in divesting the £125m it invests in fossil fuels.	Frome has committed to becoming a zero carbon town and we need to urgently shift away from fossil fuels. Ensuring the pension fund divests is a key part of this.
Resilience	NEW Expand and replicate community fridge	Set up Frome pantry for surplus items not needing refrigeration. Work with Friends of the Mount and Trinity Community Group to set up fridges	There is a need for more space to store surplus items so that less food goes to waste. As more supermarkets come on board it makes sense to have additional fridges in each area run by local community groups and volunteers.
Marketing & communications	Christmas	NEW Deliver a town Christmas event	Moved inhouse this event has moved across as the responsibility of the Marketing and Communications team.
Marketing & communications	Engagement	Hold annual Make It Happen (Yr8) conference for young people in Frome	Has moved across as the responsibility of the Marketing and Communications team who have responsibility for engagement.
Marketing & communications	Engagement	NEW Projects arising from priorities identified by young people at the above conference	Priorities to be identified to support Education conference. The first step to undertake the journey of a child through Frome schools, study
Marketing & Communications	Implement Frome Arts Forum	AMEND Performing Arts Panel recommendations to Frome Arts Forum and align timings to March and	The panel agreed to encompass not only to Reflect other venue offers such as the Silk Mill and

	recommendations	September	Black Swan and allow a broader interpretation of Arts. The dates have been moved to reflect the Frome Festival.
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Table 2. priorities at risk / not on schedule

Area of work	Objective	Action	Explanation
Environment	Improve Frome's parks and green spaces	Establish Steiner Rangers Group	Finding mutually useful projects has been difficult.
Environment	Help to keep Frome clean, tidy and welcoming and help to build resilient, engaged & involved communities	Work in partnership with MDC across the town to ensure the town is clean and tidy	MDC's ground care contract still not resulting in the level of cleanliness that FTC expects.
Environment	Allotments	Quarterly meetings with FAA to discuss and agree works and to consider future projects	These have slipped and will hopefully be rekindled with Cllrs who are allotment holders attending
Resilience	Improve access to rail services	Use s.106 and GWR funding to improve layout and signage	The replacement of the fingerposts has been delayed through the process of obtaining licences from SCC, further information was requested, including ground surveys and additional plans. The surveys and plans have now been completed and the licences can now be reconsidered
Resilience	Increase renewable energy production	Promote green energy tariffs	Frome Renewable Energy Co-op was hoping to introduce a new community owned energy tariff. This has proven to be much more difficult than anticipated. However, a new local green energy tariff for Somerset will be available from early 2019. The Town Council has also been promoting green energy tariffs from other providers such as Good Energy, Ecotricity and Bulb.

Resilience	Waste	Share Shop – develop sustainable model	Ensuring that borrowing is as affordable as possible has meant that income for the shop has been low. However, we have recently recruited a new co-ordinator and are focussing on increasing income including sponsorship from local businesses. The shop already breaks-even over the summer months.
Prosperity	NEW Influence a strategic review of the highway infrastructure and parking across the town, taking into account future development	Work with MDC and SCC to plan for impacts of future development and carry out an assessment of future demand for parking	MDC are exploring with the LEP whether they have funding that can be levered in to support this work.’ There is little progress being made with SCC.
Prosperity	Bring forward remodelling of Market Place	Phase 2 implementation	Confirmation has now been received from MDC that planning permission will be required for the proposed Phase 2 works. We will now carry out a community engagement exercise and aim to submit a planning application by mid-December
Health and wellbeing	Young People's Mental Health	Link with partners to consider potential future implementation of a workplace mental health project, particularly aimed at workplaces with young male population (under 25s) to address issue of young men and suicide. Consider too the links potential with literacy and employability.	Work on this has yet to progress. This is mainly due to a capacity issue – other priorities have taken precedence and temporary gap in project officer post (now filled.)



Marketing and Communication	Town Hall Marketing Strategy	Implement TH Marketing Strategy	A number of difficulties surrounding Change of Use permissions and licenses have delayed the marketing of the Town Hall. This has been well documented at Council Matters meetings and remains the biggest risk to the council budget and the decision to keep the strategy's integrity by delaying it was agreed. Getting on track remains the highest priority.
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Table 3. priorities that are not now being taken forward

Area of work	Objective	Action	Explanation
Health and Wellbeing	Young People's Mental Health	Working with partners, consider a model of service provision that includes support for coordination and supervision of volunteer counsellors	Discussion with schools in April 2018 clarified that volunteer counsellors in schools wasn't something that they would find helpful, due to nature of the work. Therefore, agreed not to pursue in 2018/19.
Health and Wellbeing	Young People's Mental Health	Link with Frome Learning Partnership to explore provision of mental health awareness training and support and possible interventions in primary schools in Frome	This continues to be explored but is an almost exact repeat of other action 'Explore the potential to deliver town wide Mental Health First Aid training for those working with children and young people ' so suggest removing.
Health and Wellbeing	Literacy	Continue to coordinate the Literacy Action Group	The Literacy Action Group met regularly around the development and delivery of the action plan that arose from consultation undertaken by the National Literacy Trust. The group has not met during 2018/19 as relationships have been established with key partners and actions have been delivered (or continue to be delivered) without the need for these meetings.
Health and Wellbeing	Literacy	Integrate literacy into the Making It Happen conference (through distribution of books to delegates.)	It has been agreed that, whilst the original idea behind distributing books at the conference was a good one, it is actually quite complex to manage (different reading levels, needs school administration etc) and therefore suggestion is not to repeat in 2018/19.

Health and Wellbeing	Literacy	Develop a communications plan to promote literacy objectives	There is not a need for a separate communications plan for literacy. Any need for communication will be addressed by the Marketing and Communications plan in the normal way.
Health and Wellbeing	Literacy	Continue to explore and develop reading projects with community groups	Important to focus officer time on considering strategic impact we can have on literacy.
Marketing & Communications	Internal	Implementation of CRM	Preliminary work indicated that the out of warranty server didn't have enough space to accommodate a CRM. The suggestion is that the money is diverted from this project into procuring a new server to mitigate risk and deliver the CRM project early in the next financial year.