

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Matters committee

Wednesday 29 May 2019 at 7pm

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

**Present:**

Councillors: Sheila Gore (Chair), Steve Tanner, Anne Hills, Maxine Crawley, Lizzie Boyle, Rob Collett, Ali Barclay, Paul Horton, John Nelson

**In attendance:** Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Chloe Bray (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Chris Stringer (Environment Manager), (Laura Hales (Marketing and Communications Officer), Hannah Paniccia (Finance Administrator), John Clarke (Mendip District Council)

1 member of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2019/01/CM	<p>The meeting started at 7.01pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Rich Ackroyd, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Andy Palmer, Scott Ward</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 20 February 2019</p> <p>Sheila Gore asked about the items requiring action in the 20 February 2019 minutes.</p> <p>Chris Stringer reported that the dog bin in the Trinity area has been replaced and that the consultation on providing floodlighting at Mary Baily tennis courts would begin on 30 June.</p> <p>Chris also said that because the fence around the play area at the Old Showfield was ungated there had been reports of dog owners using the gaps in fencing to take their dogs into the play area. He estimated that the gates would cost between £3k and £4k and was exploring how to find a budget.</p> <p>Rachel Griffin said the IT server maintenance had been completed with emails transferred to Office 365. When asked what would happen if the server failed, she said it was regularly backed up but she would check the frequency of back-ups and the timeframe for restoration in the case of server failure.</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>RG</p>

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	<p>The minutes of the Council Matters Committee meeting held on 20 February 2019 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2019/02/CM	<p>2. <u>Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs</u></p> <p>John Clarke urged everyone present to look into the planning application for the Saxonvale redevelopment and the read the questions posted on MDC’s website about the site.</p> <p>Paul Wynne said that an update on our response the Saxonvale planning application will go to the next Town Matters Committee and all Cllrs are currently members of the committee. He asked Cllrs to direct any questions to Jane Llewellyn, Planning and Development Manager. John Clarke praised Jane for being very informed and helpful.</p>	
2019/03/CM	<p>4. <u>Parks and open spaces update</u></p> <p>Chris Stringer presented the update. He explained that the report was in a new format designed to be quick and easy to follow.</p> <p>John Nelson said he had heard extensive positive feedback from the public on the recent improvements at Victoria Park, especially from older people. In particular, he said the new benches were much appreciated.</p> <p>Chris pointed out some highlights such as the new information boards put up around the Singer’s Trail site and a new project called Wild About Frome for which signs will be put up in some areas of FTC’s open spaces where greenery has been allowed to grow to support biodiversity.</p> <p>Anne Hills said she’d seen people asking on social media why the grass hadn’t been cut in certain areas, so she supported a project that explained the reasons for less grass cutting.</p> <p>Steve Tanner said that the Rodden Meadow and Millennium Green areas were beautiful and, because it is clear they are well managed, there is no littering there. He asked if FTC could ask Somerset County Council to manage the verges better along the road between Wallbridge and ASDA which attracts a lot of litter.</p>	

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	<p>Chris said he would discuss cutting the verges or picking up the litter along that road with Highways. He said that the ideal for such areas was to be left a little wilder but still managed. John Clarke said that Highways were trying not to cut verges as much as they used to both as a way to enhance biodiversity and in response to budgetary pressure.</p>	CS
2019/04/CM	<p>5. For decision – Management and Improvement plans for Millennium Green and Rodden Meadow.</p> <p>Chris Stringer presented the report on these two spaces which were reviewed together.</p> <p>John Nelson encouraged people to go along to Friends of the River Frome meetings and look at their updated strategy. He praised the group for working hard and being incredibly organized.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle said more places to sit in Rodden Meadow and Millennium Green would be welcome and asked if FTC could work with community organisations, especially the Men’s Shed, to provide new seating. Chris said he would explore this.</p> <p>Maxine Crawley asked whether we offer memorials, such as dedicated benches in our open spaces. Chris explained that we don’t formally offer this but we have been approached before, mainly for memorials in Victoria Park. He said a report would be tabled for a later meeting to discuss how a scheme could work.</p> <p>Chris moved on to the plans for Millennium Green. He noted that two sets of steps had been repaired at the site with the third set scheduled for repair soon. He said the footpaths were also showing some wear as they had been installed in 2000.</p> <p>Andy Jones asked for more information on the plans for an inclusive route. Chris explained that the site could be easily accessed via North Parade car park and there was good access to the picnic bench. Beyond that point it was much more difficult for wheelchair users, pushchairs and those with mobility issues to get around. He said they were considering a potential route behind the Sycamore tree.</p> <p>Steve Tanner asked if the sycamore tree, which could be the oldest tree in Frome, was going to survive following storm damage. Chris said up to half of the tree was damaged in storms 18 months ago so it was difficult to say if the tree would continue to survive. FTC funded tree surgery to reduce stress on the vulnerable limbs had increased the chances of survival.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle asked if there was signposting in the car park to warn drivers that pedestrians could walk into the car park from the Millennium Green site. Chris said the car park is run by MDC and that</p>	CS          CS



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	<p>4. The payments made over £500</p> <p>This was proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Ali Barclay and agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2019/06/CM</p>	<p>7. For Decision – Financial Regulations</p> <p>Hannah Paniccia presented the report which suggested the following edits to the Financial Regulations. Paul Wynne thanked Cllrs for their suggestions for the document.</p> <p>3.1 The <u>RFO Advisory Group (TAG)</u> shall submit to Council in respect of revenue and capital costs budget proposals for the following year by January each year.</p> <p>8.5 All invoices shall be paid <u>within 30 days as soon as possible and always within 30 days or earlier where possible.</u> unless they are formally disputed.</p> <p>8.7 All payments will be made online by BACS payment and be made by the RFO. A payment batch is limited to £100,000 <del>£50,000</del> over a period of three days. The payment batch will be approved retrospectively at least monthly by any two Cllrs.</p> <p>11.1 Applications for <del>small Mayoral grants up to £300 from an external organisation.</del> must be made on the approved form and adhere to the relevant terms and conditions.  <u>Applications for grants under £300 will be decided by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and noted by the Town Matters Committee. Applications for grants over £300 will be considered by the Grants Advisory Board and following the board's recommendation will be decided by the Town Matters Committee.</u>  <del>All grants requests including those over £300 are approved by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and noted by Council Matters.</del></p> <p>11.2 <del>The Town Council will pledge up to a maximum of £5,000 to Crowdfunder Frome projects where it can be proved they have met the criteria under the agreed scheme's terms and conditions. Pledges will be decided by the Town Clerk in consultation with three Cllrs: two nominated Cllrs (Cllrs Bielby and Collinson during 2017/18) plus either the Leader, the Mayor or the Chair of Town Matters.</del></p>	

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	<p>The recommendation was that the Council Matters Committee recommends to Council that these amendments are approved within the published Financial Regulations.</p> <p>This was proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Anne and agreed unanimously.</p>	<p><b>PWy</b></p>
<p>2019/07/CM</p>	<p><b>3. For information – Marketing and Communications update</b></p> <p>Rachel Griffin presented the report which gave an overview of the activities and priorities of the marketing team and key performance figures.</p> <p>Anne Hills asked about the possibility of Cllrs having branded clothing or accessories to wear to events. Rachel said she would look at this.</p> <p>Ali Barclay asked about the cost of noticeboards and the switch away from laminating posters. Rachel and Chris explained that the noticeboards were reasonably priced and the more noticeboards, the more we have to populate. Although there are volunteer noticeboard ambassadors it can be difficult to keep the boards up to date during holiday periods. Rachel added that not laminating posters was working well but meant the boards needed to be refreshed more often.</p> <p>Anne Hills asked what our response is when Frome is in the media. Rachel explained that it depends on the piece. Some national articles can be less popular with some Frome residents and therefore tend not to be forwarded via social media. She added that unless a specific event was happening, we respond to news in as timely a manner as possible within working hours.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle asked if there were any particular demographics FTC struggled to reach. Rachel said it was difficult to reach people who don't have an interest in the type of content we create, including those who work outside of Frome and may be less interested in engaging with their local community. She said some locations had been identified for engagement opportunities and this links in with Kate Hellard's community development work.</p> <p>John Clarke asked about the low percentage of residents voting on opportunities such as the People's Budget vote. He asked how more people could be engaged, particularly those who would prefer to vote offline. Rachel explained that for votes specifically in the Tower View and Packsaddle areas last year, leaflets were posted door to door and activities planned right on the doorstep but there was a disappointingly low turnout, so there is no guarantee that more targeted efforts will persuade people to turn up.</p>	<p><b>RG</b></p>

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	<p>Paul Wynne said the “reach” of FTC was an important issue to keep thinking about, as there are demographics that we don’t reach but who still pay via council tax for the services we provide. He added that we have good engagement with some sectors such as the arts and environment, but struggle to engage others.</p> <p>Maxine Crawley shared her experience of living in the Stonebridge area where she said many didn’t engage with the community for one of two reasons. Firstly, many people look outside of Frome to bigger towns and cities for things they want to get involved with. Secondly, disadvantaged groups may not know how to take part or be unsure about taking the first steps, with some feeling excluded, especially in the case of vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>She added that when she moved to Frome she called FTC to see how she could get involved and was immediately invited to take part in forums led by the council. She also praised the Discover Frome Information Point staff who gave her information on upcoming events and opportunities which meant she felt really involved within days, showing that if you look for opportunities to engage with the community and get involved, there are plenty of accessible ways to immediately jump in.</p> <p>Rachel added that leafleting every letterbox in Frome costs around £300 each time which is sometimes valuable but relying solely on this method was to be avoided as we don’t want to waste resources or spam people and more targeted approaches are usually more effective.</p> <p>Andy Palmer asked about new housing developments such as Edmund Park: could FTC work with the developers to provide welcome packs to new residents? Rachel said packs were available at the Information Point but she could investigate working with estate agents and developers to hand them out.</p>	<p>RG</p>
<p>2019/08/CM</p>	<p><b>8. For Information – Town Hall update</b></p> <p>Rachel Griffin presented the report which detailed tenancy and usage of the Town Hall. She revealed that the financial goals for 2019/20 had almost been met with only a further £9,000 to make in the next 10 months to meet the target. If the figures are extrapolated, they suggest there will be excess income generated which can be used to support other projects.</p> <p>Maxine Crawley asked for nicer toilet roll to be used, which Rachel said she’d look into. Andy Palmer asked about the next steps once the registry office service was in place, for instance whether we would sell confetti, to which Rachel said this would be explored.</p>	<p>RG</p>

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2019/09/CM	9. For Information – Health & Safety update  Chris Stringer presented the report which is a standard item detailing staff training as well as any updates on risk management, health and safety.  He said there was no significant news, but mentioned that there were two outstanding liability claims that had been ongoing for a long time.	
2019/10/CM	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 3 July 2019 at Frome Library	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:42pm.