

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Matters Committee

Wednesday 24 February 2021, 7pm
Zoom

Present:

Councillors: Rich Ackroyd, Lizzie Boyle, Sara Butler (chair), Rob Collett, Maxine Crawley, Mark Dorrington, Sheila Gore, Anne Hills, John Nelson, Steve Tanner

In attendance:

Steve Macarthur (Cheese & Grain), Dan Grimes (Cheese & Grain), Drew Gardner (MDC Cllr), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development & Regeneration Manager and Deputy Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Chris Stringer (Environment Manager), Beccy Byrne (Marketing and Communications Officer), George Tomlinson (Marketing and Tourism Officer), Hannah Paniccia (Finance Officer)

9 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Anita Collier, Nick Dove and Andy Wrintmore</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests Rich Ackroyd declared a personal interest in item 4</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 4 November 2020 The minutes of the Council Matters Committee meeting held on 4 November 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by John Nelson, agreed unanimously.</p>	
	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Anne Hills noted that she had received an email from Ros Wyke which confirmed that MDC still intended to transfer the ownership of Boyle Cross to FTC with a peppercorn fee. Drew Gardner offered to help ensure the handover went through. With regard to queries over the maintenance costs, Paul Wynne confirmed he would raise it with Ros Wyke at their next meeting.</p>	PWy

	<p>Rich Ackroyd confirmed that MDC had delayed a decision on the planning application for The Retreat. He suggested approaching the developers again in an informal way with regards to keeping the footpath access.</p>	
	<p>3. For information - Marketing and Communications Update George Tomlinson provided an update about the new website. She noted one of the main reasons for updating the website was the new government requirement to make websites accessible. Areas of the website could be accessed without using a traditional menu. The search function had been greatly improved and could be filtered, for example, by documents. There was a new report or request section, for example, to find out about bins, council tax, street lighting and so on. Rachel Griffin noted George's overview could not reflect the enormous amount of work George had put into the redesign. She hoped it would become an example of what a great town council website should be. Thanks to George.</p> <p>Rachel explained the website was so important as it was the council's best face forward and was a central place for all information. It could only be changed by FTC staff so helped with minimising misinformation. Rachel also gave an overview of social media since the last update in November. Much of the content focused on the COVID government rule changes, events, car parking, job opportunities, road closures, Saturday market campaign, advice and guidance.</p>	
	<p>4. For decision – Budget approval for COVID-related improvements at Cheese & Grain Peter Wheelhouse gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>Steve Macarthur explained that the environment in the hall would have been intolerable post COVID 19. It was a matter of people's health to make it a safe environment. It was also in preparation for a possible change to regulations that would make a ventilation system compulsory to maintain a licence. C&G had always struggled to raise capital funds as they were not the owners of the building. No other funding source could move as quickly as FTC.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the budget and some of the technical elements of the ventilation system.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allocate a budget of £20k for the installation of a ventilation system in the main hall of the Cheese & Grain to be financed 	

	<p>from the Covid-19 expenditure code and underwritten by reserves</p> <p>2. Delegate to the Deputy Town Clerk to finalise the technical details with the Cheese & Grain and place an order with a suitable supplier by 31 March 2021</p> <p>Proposed by Maxine Crawley, seconded by John Nelson, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWh
	<p>5. For decision - Management & Improvement plans for the Old Showfield and New Road</p> <p>Chris Stringer gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>Anne Hills asked how much ownership a local community group could have over a space that is used by the whole town. Chris explained participation was something to be encouraged but would be considered space by space. The balance for these decisions had to come from staff and Cllrs. He said it was important to give residents the opportunity to tell FTC what they wanted from these open spaces.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington asked if New Road could be protected by the Theodora Ann Le Gros for an Open Space Trust. Paul Wynne explained it would be FTC's intention.</p> <p>Rob Collett asked if there were any community groups that used the Showfield. Chris said there weren't but they did try and support the park run. There could possibly be scope for volunteers to help look after the orchard. Paul Wynne expressed a hope to enable the community to take control of their open spaces with FTC as the safety net. This was the hope for smaller spaces across the town.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the updated management plans for the Old Showfield and New Road 2. Adopt the new site risk assessments for the Showfield and New Road 3. Approve the scheduled review dates for the plans 4. Approve the scheduled annual review of the site risk assessments 5. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager to deliver the plans 6. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager to keep the site risk assessments up to date in-between approval and the (scheduled) annual reviews, including updating the coronavirus risk assessment for both spaces 	<p>CS</p> <p>CS</p>

	<p>Proposed by Sheila Gore, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
	<p>6. For approval - Financial update to 31 January 2021 Hannah Paniccia provided a summary of the report and made some highlights.</p> <p>The recommendations were to approve the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal Auditors report for the period September to December 2020 2. Expenditure from Market Place Phase 3 (700 – 4117) of £3,460 to come from EMR 356 Saxonvale Legacy 3. Income and expenditure sheet to 31 January 2021 4. Payments made over £500 for October 2020 to January 2021 5. Balance sheet including the breakdown of reserves at 31 January 2021 <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Andy Palmer, agreed unanimously.</p>	
	<p>7. For information - An update on the town's parks and green spaces Chris Stringer summarised the report. He noted the skatepark had been closed off after discussion with the police. There had been lots of enquiries during the week but it was being done to help get out of lockdown. Chris highlighted the improvements to the steps and footpaths at Millennium Green and how hard the Rangers had worked.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd asked Chris to ask SCC to get them to look at the footpath along Rodden Meadow as it looked as though it was sliding again.</p>	
	<p>8. For information - Update on the Frome Town Hall Rachel Griffin provided a summary of the report. She noted that since the last update there had been two further national lockdowns. Maintenance and cleaning were important and done regularly. A minimal amount of staff were working at the Town Hall. This would be amended once government advice changed. Unfortunately, the income deficit had increased. However, the staff team would work hard to minimise this as soon as possible. It was hoped roof repairs would take place in the summer. An energy audit had taken place of the building.</p> <p>Maxine Crawley asked what was happening about weddings. Rachel explained weddings could resume from 29 March, and</p>	

	<p>the wedding service anticipated many will wait until further restrictions would be lifted. The ceremonies were arranged by SCC who had booked a number of dates for use of the Council Chamber for the ceremonies. FTC provide wrap round facilities for weddings such as pre-drinks and, for those weddings at the end of the day, wedding breakfasts and receptions.</p> <p>John Nelson asked if there had been a study on the Town Hall's carbon output. Rachel noted it had been done partially, improvement to the windows and installation of LED would help with the zero emissions target.</p> <p>Anne Hills asked whether council meetings would be allowed to continue online. Paul Wynne explained the reality was forging ahead of legislation. The emergency provision was in place until 6 May then FTC would have to go back to physical meetings. Although he couldn't be certain Paul felt the direction of travel would allow some element of online attendance.</p>	
	<p>9. For information - Health & Safety update Chris Stringer gave an overview of the report. Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 5 May 2021 on Zoom.</p>	

Table 1 - Agenda items

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.11pm