

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an informal meeting of Frome Town Council

This meeting was originally scheduled for Wednesday 18 March 2020. Due to the global pandemic caused by COVID – 19 all UK residents were ordered by central government to stay at home. This meeting was then conducted via email before new legislation was introduced to allow virtual council meetings.

Thursday 19 March 2020

Present via email contribution:

Councillors: Richard Ackroyd, Ali Barclay, Lizzie Boyle, Sara Butler, Rob Collett, Anita Collier, Maxine Crawley, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Sheila Gore, Anne Hills, Paul Horton, John Nelson, Andy Palmer, Steve Tanner, Scott Ward

In attendance via email contribution:

Paul Wynne, Town Clerk
Laura Flaherty, Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor

No members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2020/9/FC	<p>Paul Wynne provided this email explanation to Cllrs for how the decisions would be made:</p> <p>“The legal situation is that between meetings I can take decisions – obviously, this happens loads of times a day. However, where there are items that would normally be discussed at a council meeting, I would prefer to have an indication of your views before I make the decision. This is where we are now as tonight's Council meeting has been cancelled.</p> <p>I'm going to send you a series of emails – one for each agenda item with a hyperlink taking you to the report. Where the report and recommendation is pretty straightforward I'll simply cut n paste the original recommendation into the email. For the more complex items, Peter and I will insert into the email some FAQs and answers that we think might have come up in discussion.</p> <p>You just need to reply separately to each email with one word either agree, object or abstain. Please reply just to me, not "reply to all".</p> <p>If you were voting in person, there'd need to be at least six Cllrs to be quorate. If I receive six or more replies, I'll take the decision based on the majority view.</p> <p>I accept this will limit the level of discussion that you'd normally have but in these uncertain times, Mark (as Chair), Rich, Anne and I think this is a good alternative”</p>	

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2020/10/FC	<p>1a. Apologies for absence None was received</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 22 January 2020 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 22 January 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Informally agreed by majority</p>	
2020/11/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs None</p>	
2020/12/FC	<p>3. For decision - Proposed Environmental Resilience Framework The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council responds to the 2018 climate emergency declaration by establishing an Environmental Resilience Framework (ERF) that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. provides an overarching and cross-cutting framework for the Council's work addressing climate change and environmental issues, targeting CO₂ emission reduction, mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity and ecological concerns b. explores new initiatives to be pursued c. ensures that environmental resilience is taken into account in everything that we do as a Council d. identifies appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation 2. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk to develop a Framework and a costed programme of existing and proposed work <p>Informally agreed by majority.</p>	
2020/13/FC	<p>4. For decision - Climate Emergency Programme and budget This item was quite complex, so a series of FAQs and answers was given to Cllrs:</p> <p>Q: How can we be certain that we are addressing the right priorities in our response?</p> <p>A: The Strategy has been developed following local workshops involving 450 members of the local community. The priorities identified are also based on authoritative data from Project Drawdown and emissions data from Small World Consulting, Scatter and Ashden.</p>	

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	<p>Q: What are the financial implications of agreeing additional expenditure of £64k at this time?</p> <p>A: There is a dependency on the Saxonvale Legacy (reserves) to finance this expenditure. On the basis that we proceed with the Market Place Phase 2 project within the window of opportunity identified in that report, an additional £64k of expenditure would limit our flexibility to respond to the coronavirus if we need to in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Q: Isn't there also an emergency to be addressed in addressing Climate Change and therefore a requirement for us to act quickly?</p> <p>A: Yes, but our work in this area can continue with a budget of £37k already agreed. We have also identified opportunities to attract external grant funding that are not dependent on match funding and which we have begun to follow up.</p> <p>Comments from Cllrs: Lizzie Boyle emailed to say her preferred approach would be to agree the Climate Emergency Programme at a strategic level and have a flexible approach to the workplan.</p> <p>Rob Collett and Paul Horton both emailed preferring to agree the strategic approach and the principle of recruiting and upping the budget but recognise that this will have to wait.</p> <p>Sheila Gore emailed supporting the strategy is right but would like the actions phased in slowly due to the current situation.</p> <p>Paul Wynne noted that the Corvid 19 situation meant very uncertain times ahead and suggested that at this item was deferred for the time being. He noted the consensus to support the proposed strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Amended recommendation:</p> <p><i>Defer a decision on the proposed Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan and additional expenditure until we have a clearer idea of the calls on our reserves resulting from the coronavirus crisis.</i></p> <p>Informally agreed by majority.</p>	
2020/14/FC	<p>5. For decision - Local Councils Award Scheme</p> <p>Comments by Cllrs</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle emailed suggesting noting in the Sustainability section the agreement to support the Environmental Resilience Framework. In Principle 5, she suggested adding FTC has been transparent and community oriented and this was a key factor in having all seats contested in the most recent local elections and that of 17</p>	

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	<p>Councillors, 13 were new in 2019, demonstrating an active citizenship.</p> <p>The recommendation was to confirm Frome Town Council meets the all the requirements to apply for the Gold Quality Local Council's Award including the statement on the five topics that will be presented to NALC's accreditation panel.</p> <p>Informally agreed by majority.</p>	
2020/15/FC	<p>6. For decision - Proposed implementation of Market Place phase 2</p> <p>Information on the objectives and main elements of the scheme were presented in this report. It was explained that the scheme has been subject to thorough public consultation over several years and scrutiny by Somerset County Council (highway authority) and Mendip District Council (planning authority) and now has planning consent. An additional confidential report relating to a tendering exercise that would have been discussed in confidential session at the meeting was also provided to Cllrs (the outcome is not minuted here).</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proceed to implement the Market Place Phase 2 scheme as soon as possible subject to agreement on the costs to be discussed in confidential session 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. launch a design competition for the bus shelter artwork designs in consultation with the Frome Twinning Association b. contact business owners, town centre event organisers and the wider community well ahead of the start of works and at regular intervals through the construction phase to provide information on the details of the scheme and traffic management arrangements <p>Informally agreed by majority.</p>	
2020/16/FC	<p>The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed and was dependent on the national restrictions.</p>	