

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 22 April 2020 at 7pm  
Zoom

### Present:

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, Andy Wrintmore

### In attendance:

Bob Ashford (Fair Frome), Martin Dimery (SCC Cllr), John Clarke (MDC/SCC Cllr), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Kate Hellard (Community Development Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Chris Stringer (Environment Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

23 Members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2020/17/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm Mark Dorrington gave an introduction to how the meeting would be conducted as it was the first to happen virtually.</p> <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 19 March 2020 The minutes of the informal Frome Town Council meeting held on 19 March 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/18/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Cllr John Clarke praised FTC's emergency response to the COVID - 19 pandemic with particular thanks to FTC staff.</p> <p>John provided a brief update from SCC. They were staffing the emergency helpline number for Somerset, issuing briefs, and had set up a website <a href="http://turnzus.org.uk">turnzus.org.uk</a> for additional support. He also suggested that if anyone was struggling financially, they should</p>	

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	<p>Speak with MDC about council tax financial support. He explained it was a difficult time for everyone and we needed to recognise the work of local communities working together to support the vulnerable. John hoped we would learn from this for the future.</p> <p>Cllr Martin Dimery echoed John and said, in a localised area you can take the lead. He thanked FTC for the emergency food delivery service and all they had done for the community so far.</p> <p>A member of the public Mel Usher, had submitted a question via email in advance of the meeting:</p> <p><i>Can the Town Council with its position of democratic legitimacy consider organising a transparent review of the impact of Covid 19 on the community, how well the emergency plan worked and where were the inevitable gaps, how voluntary, private sector and public organisations were able to cope, what lessons could be learned from elsewhere both in the UK and abroad and how we could all better prepare for the future?</i></p> <p><i>Some of this might have an impact on how the Town Council works, how it assesses its priorities in the future and its role in the community.</i></p> <p><i>I must stress that none of this is looking to apportion any blame, it's a learning experience. It does however need to be done properly with sufficient resources and priority.</i></p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse answered that FTC are committed to doing this. Peter and a working group of Cllrs were beginning to prepare a recovery or bounce back plan. The plan would look at big issues and actions for the long and short term. In addition, there would be a review of the current work being doing and lessons would be learned from what did not work well.</p> <p>After the well-received resident leaflet at the beginning of lockdown Paul Wynne explained that a second leaflet was being produced with more specific information about sources of support. He asked whether Cllrs would be happy to ask the bank of volunteers to deliver the leaflets (observing social distancing) as Royal Mail did not have the capacity. There was a consensus amongst Cllrs that they were happy to ask volunteers to deliver the leaflets as long as they were given clear guidance and observed social distancing.</p> <p>Bob Ashford Chair of Fair Frome provided an update on their work during the crisis. He explained they had put all their effort into the food bank and recruiting new volunteers. In March they were serving three times more people than in January. The food parcels now</p>	
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	<p>included colouring books, activity books, fresh fruit and veg, bread and eggs which had been received very well. Unfortunately, the furniture bank had to be closed but they were able to help people in other ways.</p> <p>Fair Frome had been working closely with other organisations to make sure their work was complementary. They had been in conversation with all headteachers to find out families' needs. Many were concerned about children who used to get free school meals and breakfast now they were no longer seeing them on a daily basis. Fair Frome had been able to provide additional food directly to the schools to be shared with pupils and their families. Every child on income related free school meals had been provided with an Asda store card and voucher for SK Fruits so they were able to shop with choice and dignity. Bob noted that none of this would have been possible without the public, charities, businesses and individuals and it was heartwarming to see.</p> <p>Sheila Gore thanked Bob for his update and asked if any gaps had been identified. Bob explained the biggest gap was around older people, trying to get care services to refer them to Fair Frome.</p>	
2020/19/FC	<p><b>3. For decision - Hold monthly Council meetings and cancel the meeting calendar until further notice</b></p> <p>Paul Wynne gave an overview of the report which proposed to hold monthly Council meetings and no committee meetings until further notice. The frequency of TAG meetings would be weekly for near future alongside a Cllr Q&amp;A on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWy
2020/20/FC	<p><b>4. For information - Update on the services provided by FTC during the Covid 19 lockdown</b></p> <p>Rich Ackroyd gave a summary of the report. He said the biggest element to take away was the speed that staff and Cllrs had reacted to the situation and put support in place. Before lockdown had been enforced, an emergency plan and emergency group had been established and meetings were held with key organisations to understand their needs. He noted how heartening it had been to see how everyone had pulled together and hoped to retain this community spirit going forward.</p> <p>Rich thanked all staff for making lockdown easier, by all moving to different tasks immediately. He said they were a multi-tasking and multi skilled work force.</p>	

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2020/21/FC	<p>5. For decision – approve the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection policy and a temporary Volunteer policy for the coronavirus outbreak</p> <p>Kate Hellard provided an overview of the report and the two policies.</p> <p>With regard to the protection policy, Sheila Gore raised a concern that the role of Safeguarding Officer had been allocated to a person rather than a job role. She felt that the responsibility should lie with the Town Clerk as the most senior position within the staff body. Paul Wynne acknowledged Sheila’s point. He explained the role was given to Laura Flaherty as it fitted with her HR responsibilities and it required specialist knowledge and training that he as Town Clerk did not have the capacity for. Kate Hellard also noted that the named person in the policy had to keep the case information confidentially and so no delegation was permitted, again this would be difficult for the Town Clerk. She explained that staff capacity and skill set had been considered carefully.</p> <p>It was agreed to review the policy again in three months’ time.</p> <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p> <p><b>Adopt the temporary volunteer policy</b> Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Lizzie Boyle, agreed unanimously</p>	KH/LF
2020/22/FC	<p>The next item discussed a Frome business and because it contained information that is economically sensitive the Mayor proposed that it should be held in confidential session and that members of the public and press be asked to leave the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Andy Palmer, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/23/FC	<p>6. Confidential item</p> <p>Cllrs ratified the Town Clerk’s decision.</p>	
2020/24/FC	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 20 May 2020 on Zoom</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.22pm