

Agenda Item 8

For decision – Adopting Friends of the River Frome’s 2020 to 2030 strategy for the river
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Summary

On behalf of the Friends of the River Frome – FORF - Simon Keyes presented the group’s updated strategy for the river and the town at last month’s Annual Town Meeting.

Following Simon’s presentation, there was a noted and unanimous desire to formally recognise and adopt the new strategy prepared by the group.

And very simply, this report recommends doing that.

The report also outlines some of the ways in which the strategy might shape FTC’s work; and provides some early details where these can already be provided.



FTC spaces

This is a list of the spaces that we look after where our work is likely to be shaped to some degree by the projects and the strategic aims and objectives identified in the FORF strategy.

Riverside spaces that we look after:

- Rodden Meadow (RM)
- Weylands (WEY)
- Welshmill (WML)
- The Roundhouse (RH)
- Chateau-Gontier Walk (CGW)
- Henley Way (HW)

We also look after the Dippy (DPY) – and this is included here because of the culverted watercourse that runs west to east. This man-made watercourse joins the river Frome below Adderwell and Knights Maltings; and the strategy references a project to re-wild the culvert.

For completeness, we also hold a defined interest in Whatcombe Fields (the Town Council is a shareholder) However, it should be noted that we have the same voting right as any other shareholder in how these fields are managed and looked after.

Projects

[Appendix 6](#) is a set of five tables that provide some more detail about the prospective projects mentioned in the strategy.

For the purposes of this report, projects have been grouped together differently to their groupings in the strategy.

Categories:

- Working towards strategies and plans
- Projects suggested for the riverbank spaces that we look after
- Projects where FTC is one of but not the only landowner involved
- Community engagement, involvement and stewardship
- Projects and discussions that are likely to be led by others (including FORF)

Notes on the tables

- The description line in the table is shorter than the detail contained in the strategy; but the references correspond exactly
- Where projects are expected to see changes on the ground in FTC spaces, this is indicated
- Some projects might see changes in the overall and collective management of our riverside spaces - whereas others will be specific to individual spaces
- Where projects have implications for other landowners, this is indicated with an orange box in the table

Next steps – and partners

It's important to note that the tables are indicative at this stage.

In part this is because some projects haven't been drawn up yet; and this is particularly the case with the contributing strategies and plans. Because of this, it would be premature to discuss how a tree management and woody debris policy might shape our work in Rodden Meadow; just as it's premature to detail where information boards might go and what they might say, for example.

Naturally, larger projects (including strategies and plans) may take longer to come together; and they are likely to require significant funding and/or regular expenditure. These projects may require more time and resources, as well; and projects involving more than one landowner and multiple interested parties are also likely to be more complex.

And the strategy is an ambitious one – with significant and exciting projects - and an important emphasis on developing and agreeing strategies, plans and guidance for matters and concerns relating to the river.

This means a number of partners are likely to be involved alongside FORF – including local farmers, the Environment Agency, Bristol Water and Wessex Water - and in everything there will necessarily be an understanding that works upstream and downstream can have important implications elsewhere along the river corridor.

As projects are developed and prioritised then, they will be reflected (or continue to be reflected) in the individual management plans for FTC's spaces.

And larger projects are likely to be subject to dedicated reports presented to the Council Matters and Town Matters committees.

Recommendations

1. Formally adopt the strategy
2. Note the list of riverside spaces that we look after; and the tables providing early information about projects likely to come from adopting the strategy