

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 20 May 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:

Sgt. Rachel Clark, Simon Keyes (Friends of the River Frome), Martin Dimery (SCC Cllr), John Clarke (MDC/SCC Cllr), Adam Boyden (MDC 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), Beccy Byrne (Marketing and Communications Officer), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

20 Members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2020/25/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7.02pm</p> <p>Mark Dorrington thanked his fellow Cllrs and said it was a pleasure to work them all. He also thanked the staff and said they all ‘punch above their weight’. He thanked Laura and Chloe who had kept his dairy organised. He gave special thanks to the people of Frome. He said he had been made to feel welcome everywhere. The typical Frome spirit was about volunteering and helping each other and they would all be better communities for it.</p> <p>1. Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor</p> <p>Mark Dorrington proposed Anita Collier as Mayor of Frome 2020/21, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Anita thanked everyone for the support they had shown. She also thanked Mark who she had said had been a great mentor. He had done a fantastic job and left big shoes for her to fill. Anita said she was thrilled and excited to fulfil the role of Mayor and promised to do her very best.</p> <p>Anita Collier proposed Andy Wrintmore as Deputy Mayor of Frome 2020/21, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Andy thanked everyone and said it was a great honour.</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	(Anita and Andy signed their acceptance of office declaration the following day at the Town Hall in the presence of the Town Clerk)	
2020/26/FC	<p>2a. Apologies for absence None was received.</p> <p>2b. Declaration of members' interests Rich Ackroyd declared a personal interest in item 3 as a trustee of Friends of the River Frome.</p> <p>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 22 April 2020 The minutes of the Extraordinary Frome Town Council meeting held on 22 April 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/27/FC	<p>3. Presentation from Friends of the River Frome Simon Keyes presented the Friends of the River Frome (FORF) 'River Strategy'. Simon explained that the river was central to Frome's identity. Unfortunately, it was under threat and it was more important than ever to conserve and enhance it. The strategy covered the river from Spring Gardens to Blatchbridge, which was about a five-mile stretch.</p> <p>The vision of FORF was as Frome grows the river should be conserved. To achieve this, they had identified five strategic aims and twenty-four projects. The full strategy can be viewed here. Their next steps were to gain endorsement and incorporation of the strategy in the plans of FTC and MDC, set up task forces for each aim, develop partnerships and increase membership and volunteers.</p> <p>John Nelson noted that the work of FORF had been fantastic and built on strong foundations. He felt the strategy fitted perfectly in FTC's resilience framework and he would fully endorse it.</p> <p>Paul Wynne explained that FTC were unable to adopt the strategy at the meeting as it was not a recommendation on the agenda. However, he said he would ensure it was on the agenda for the next Council meeting in June.</p>	PWy
2020/28/FC	<p>4. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Adam Boyden welcomed Anita to her new role as Mayor. Adam offered to help FORF present the strategy to MDC. He also noted that he was working with Anne Hills and Mendip Credit Union to help more people access their services. Anne said she welcomed Adam's involvement.</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>Andy Jones had heard a rumour that FTC had frozen grant funding to all community groups. Kate Hellard explained this was not true. All funding that had previously been committed would be paid as agreed. New applications had been suspended with a new round expected in the Autumn. There would be a review of the grants programme and Kate would be working with Somerset Community Foundation in light of the recent pandemic to explore additional grant budgets and ensure FTC’s funding did not double up what was already available. This would help so that no organisation would miss out on funding.</p> <p>Lenka Grimes asked what FTC’s response was to the ‘Save River Frome pathway’ campaign? Jane Llewellyn explained that the revised planning application which affected the river pathway had been discussed at PAG the week before. FTC would formally submit an objection to the application. The issue of destruction was being investigated by the Environment Agency and planning enforcement. Jane also noted that FTC was working in partnership with FORF and other organisations to find the right solution. Jane and Steve Tanner would also be arranging a meeting with the landowners to discuss their application.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd asked Rachel Clark if there were any new updates about the arson attacks in Trinity? Rachel explained she had met with Kate Hellard, Nick Dove and the Trinity community group to try to come up with some solutions. The police were continuing patrols in the area, installing a CCTV camera, and distributing reward leaflets. There had been nothing positive in terms of an arrest but what was positive was there had been no more attacks.</p> <p>Andy Wrintmore asked to meet Rachel to discuss the issue of drugs around the town. Rachel noted there were some areas around the town that were on their radar and would be happy to have a further conversation with Andy.</p>	<p>Laura to arrange meeting</p>
<p>2020/29/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision - Adoption of Standing Orders, Cllrs’ Code of Conduct and General Power of Competence</p> <p>Paul Wynne highlighted the minor proposed changes which had been outlined in the report. Most noteworthy was that the Planning Advisory Group to change it's name to the Planning Committee. No changes were proposed to the Cllr’s Code of Conduct and Paul confirmed that criteria to adopt the power of general competence were met.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Standing Orders at Appendix 1. 2. Approve the Cllrs’ Code of Conduct at Appendix 2 	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>3. Confirm that the eligibility criteria for utilising the power of general competence are met.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2020/30/FC</p>	<p>6. For decision – Appointing the Leader and deputy Leader of the Council, the membership, chair and deputy chair of the Town Matters, Council Matters and Planning Committees and Grants Advisory Group</p> <p>1. Election of the Leader and Deputy Leader Lizzie Boyle proposed Anne Hills as Leader of FTC and Maxine Crawley as Deputy Leader of FTC, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>2. Membership of committees and advisory groups</p> <p>a. Council Matters Committee Andy Palmer Andy Wrintmore Anita Collier Anne Hills John Nelson Lizzie Boyle Mark Dorrington Maxine Crawley Nick Dove Rich Ackroyd Rob Collett Sara Butler Sheila Gore Steve Tanner</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>b. Town Matters Committee Ali Barclay Andy Palmer Andy Wrintmore Anita Collier Anne Hills John Nelson Mark Dorrington Maxine Crawley Nick Dove Paul Horton</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

<p>Rich Ackroyd Rob Collett Sara Butler Scott Ward Steve Tanner</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Ali Barclay, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>c. Planning Committee Andy Palmer Anita Collier Anne Hills John Nelson Lizzie Boyle Mark Dorrington Paul Horton Rich Ackroyd Sheila Gore Steve Tanner</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>d. Grants Advisory Group Ali Barclay Andy Palmer Andy Wrintmore Anita Collier Anne Hills John Nelson Mark Dorrington Rich Ackroyd Scott Ward Sheila Gore Steve Tanner</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>(The Mayor, Leader, Deputy Leader, the chairs of the three committees will sit on both the Council Matters and the Town Matters Committees).</p> <p>3. Election of the Chair and Deputy Chair of committees</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sara Butler a Chair of Council Matters	
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FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Nelson as Deputy Chair of Council Matters • Andy Palmer as Chair of Town Matters • Scott Ward as Deputy Chair of Town Matters • Steve Tanner as Chair of the Planning Committee • Paul Horton as Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee • Mark Dorrington as Chair of the Grants Advisory Group • Sheila Gore as Deputy Chair of the Grants Advisory Group <p>seconded by Paul Horton, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/31/FC	<p>7a. For decision – Year End financial reports to March 2020, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20 and revised Earmarked Reserves</p> <p>Sarah Williams presented the item and explained the importance of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return</p> <p>Sarah gave special thanks to Hannah Paniccia whose diligence and hard work allowed for such a positive and well balanced financial year.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>1. Instruct the Chair and the Clerk to sign Cllrs agreement to all the governance statements in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement and for it to be recorded as a minute reference.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/32/FC	<p>7b. For decision – Year End financial reports to March 2020, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20 and revised Earmarked Reserves</p> <p>Cllrs considered the Accounting Statements, which were presented by Sarah Williams.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>2. The Responsible Finance Officer has certified that the accounting statements fairly represent the financial position of Frome Town Council.</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/33/FC	<p>7c. For decision – Year End financial reports to March 2020, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20 and revised Earmarked Reserves</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>3. Cllrs to instruct the Chair and the RFO to sign on their behalf that they have approved the accounting statements.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>4. Approve the revised Earmarked Reserves for the start of the financial year.</p> <p>5. Note the amount in the General Reserve at the start of the financial year.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by John Nelson, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/34/FC	<p>8. For Decision – Changes to Financial Regulations</p> <p>Sarah Williams highlighted the three proposed changes which were outlined in the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/35/FC	<p>9. For information – Preliminary 20/21 Budget Revision re. Covid-19.</p> <p>Sarah Williams provided an overview of the report. She explained the greatest loss of income had been from the closure of the Town Hall and the stopping of the Mendip Tourism grant. Additional spending had been made in response to COVID 19. At the time FTC had requested additional funding of £117k from MDC.</p> <p>Anne Hills noted that FTC had written to MDC asking they release the funding intended for Parish Councils.</p> <p>John Clarke asked all district Cllrs to lobby MDC to honour what the Secretary of State had intended for the funding. John welcomed the fact FTC was bidding for a share of the funds.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle asked Sarah if she was aware of any payment holidays from the Public Works Loan Board. Sarah said she was not but would investigate the possibility.</p>	SW
2020/36/FC	10. For decision – Towards a COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Frome	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>Peter Wheelhouse summarised the report. He explained that a steering group of nine Cllrs had been formed. Their guiding principles were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• securing a better future for Frome• focus on greater resilience from shocks from the outside world• consider the positive changes of more volunteering, neighbourhood networks, walking/cycling, less pollution and try and sustain them• strengthening partnerships with the community, local gov. etc.• reflect on lessons learned from FTC's response to the recent emergency <p>Early workstreams that had been identified were under the banners of community, economy, resilience and sustainability. Some of the identified work was; a community survey, engagement with street networks and community organisations, an event week to bring the community together, better support for mental health, supporting businesses to reopen, support local food production and encourage greater food security, reviewing the climate emergency climate action plan and installing pop up cycle lanes to name a few.</p> <p>Peter explained that one of the next steps was for the steering group to engage external advice and to build community ownership. In addition, to set up a separate panel to learn lessons from FTC's emergency response.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd asked if the size of the panels and who would be involved had been decided? Peter said they would be fairly small but diverse. He would be having discussions with the Leader and steering group to decide on these details.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle noted that some of the work around walking and cycling would require adjustments to roads, which FTC do not have the powers to do. She welcomed the support of SCC Cllrs to refocus priorities especially with the return to schools.</p> <p>John Clark voiced his concern about those residents who were already struggling would be hit the hardest after the emergency passed. He welcomed FTC's point about engaging with the community and felt the work should be community led. Peter noted that FTC had been trialling webinars around personal financial help led by Anne Hills. He had made connections with colleagues at MDC and was attending fortnightly meetings with other representatives of the five towns in Mendip.</p> <p>Andy Palmer asked what the status of the extra grant funding for businesses that fell through the gap was? Peter explained MDC had</p>	
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FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>received government guidance last week and was expecting the application forms to be available on their website the next week.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree the principles set out above that will guide the work on a Recovery Plan for Frome 2. To endorse the early work identified above 3. To approve the establishment of a ‘Leap Forward Panel’ to be supported by the Deputy Town Clerk that brings together a lead town councillor and representatives from outside the Council that can advise the Council on its Recovery Plan work; authority to be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader to agree membership 4. To delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with councillors on the Steering Group to develop a costed Recovery Plan based on advice from the ‘Leap Forward Panel’ and make recommendations to Council – an update to be provided as soon as possible 5. To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to commission a Panel to consider the emergency response to date. A detailed report on the membership, remit of this Panel and the timetable it will work to is to be presented to the next meeting of Council in June. <p>Proposed by Maxine Crawley, seconded by Andy Palmer, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Paul Wynne noted that when the agenda was released there was an eleventh agenda item proposing minor changes to the volunteer policy on use of facemasks. Instead of making short term changes to the policy, Chris Stringer would be completing a further risk assessment on the facemask wearing guidance.</p>	<p>PWh</p> <p>PWh</p> <p>PWy</p> <p>CS</p>
2020/37/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 24 June 2020 on Zoom	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.33pm