

# FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Matters Committee

Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 7pm

Frome Town Hall, Christchurch Street West, Frome BA11 1EB

## Present:

Councillors: Richard Ackroyd, Lizzie Boyle, Sara Butler, Rob Collett, Maxine Crawley, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Sheila Gore, Anne Hills, Steve Tanner, Andy Wrintmore

## In attendance:

Cllr Anita Collier, Cllr John Nelson, Cllr John Clarke, Cllr Drew Gardner, Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Hannah Paniccia (Finance Assistant), Viv Whitaker (Project Officer), Chris Stringer (Environment Manager), Helen Viner (Community Projects Officer), Beccy Byrne (Marketing and Communications Officer), Nykki Mehta (Events Administrator), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

18 Members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2020/38/CM	<p>The meeting started at 7.01pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Ali Barclay</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 6 November 2019 The minutes of the Council Matters Committee meeting held on 6 November 2019 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/39/CM	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Rich Ackroyd provided an update on a number of items. A meeting had been arranged with Frome Festival to discuss the terms of their grant award from FTC. The loose paving slabs on Bath Street had been reported to Highways. A report on the puddles that form on Jenson Button Bridge after heavy rainfall had been made to MDC. Rich would be investigating the effect of the 'Right-to-roam' law where pre-1949 rights of way that were not on official maps had to be recorded in the next 10 years or they would no longer be protected.</p> <p>Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.06pm</p>	

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2020/40/CM	<p>5. For decision – Possible acquisition of an open space near Broadway (and Oakfield Road)</p> <p>This item was brought forward due to the public interest</p> <p>Chris Stringer provided an overview of the report. He explained if Cllrs agreed to the recommendations the next step would be progress talks with MDC.</p> <p>John Clarke, Chair of Broadway Allotment and Community Garden Association, thanked Chris for his support. He noted that he had met with the MDC Assets Manager earlier in the week and there was an opportunity to present a business case to the Phoenix Board in April. John explained the land presented opportunities for community allotments, food education and therefore resilience, protection of bio diversity and planting an orchard. All would contribute to the health and wellbeing of the residents.</p> <p>Chris noted that he was looking forward to working with the community group and saw it as an exciting opportunity for the Rangers to pass on their skills and experience. In turn, this would enable the community to take on the management of the space and gain a sense of ownership.</p> <p>Sheila Gore asked if the land would be leased to FTC or ownership would be transferred to FTC? Chris answered that he understood that MDC’s preference was for the land to be leased to FTC rather than the association. It was a public open space and would remain so.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington asked Chris if the space would be managed similarly to the allotments? Chris explained it was unlikely as it was a community space and it would be unlikely for the allotment association to become involved.</p> <p>Drew Gardner applauded John’s efforts. He felt it was a broader community resource and was one of the last wild established areas. It was also home to the only urban badger population and was possibly the foraging area of the greater horseshoe bat. He said it was an opportunity to celebrate wildlife and biodiversity.</p> <p>A member of the Association reiterated how the land was not suitable for housing. It was a haven for wildlife and an important resource. It was a place of learning with community value.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Delegate responsibility to the Lead Ranger to carry on early conversations with the local community about ideas for the space</li></ol>	DK
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	<p>2. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager (supported by the Town Clerk) to continue discussions with MDC about the possibility of taking on the freehold of the land (preferred); or a long-term lease in line with the leases already agreed for other green spaces recently transferred from MDC to FTC</p> <p>3. Report back to Council when the transfer has been completed</p> <p>4. Report back to the Council Matters Committee in due course with a Management &amp; Improvement Plan for the space</p> <p>Proposed by Maxine Crawley, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed by majority.</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>CS</p> <p>CS</p>
<p>2020/41/CM</p>	<p>3. For decision - Floodlighting the tennis courts on the Mary Baily playing field</p> <p>Chris Stringer gave an overview of the report. He explained that the Tennis Club could lose their in-principle funding if FTC did not make a commitment to the project.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd noted he had worked with Chris and the tennis club and any previous concerns about the project had been worked through. He said there were lots of benefits to being able to play in the evenings.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm FTC’s support for the project; thereby enabling the tennis club to finalise the planning applications for the floodlights and the pavilion</li> <li>2. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager to carry on discussions with the tennis club exploring the opportunities for free tennis and reduced booking fees out of season</li> <li>3. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager to report back to the appropriate Council Matters or Council meeting at the next key stage in the project</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Lizzie Boyle, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>CS</p>
<p>2020/42/CM</p>	<p>4. For discussion - Launch of the Marketing and Communication Strategy Review 2020</p> <p>Rachel Griffin explained the Frome Town Council Communication Strategy was adopted in 2016 and was last reviewed in February 2019. To start the review process Rachel asked Cllrs, staff and members of the public to brainstorm the strategy headings to look at the strategy and identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who our audiences are, perhaps prioritise them</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why we communicate</li> <li>• What to communicate, what methods of communication do we use and ask if there are any others that we should employ</li> <li>• Finally, looking at how we communicate, how effective we are and look at desired actions or changes to be made to the current strategy.</li> </ul> <p>The key points from the discussions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with residents was good. There is a need to look at demographics in more detail and consider a strategy that addresses the diversity of the community</li> <li>• Someone asked how do we shed the negative image that councils have generally and stress the innovative and open approach of FTC?</li> <li>• It was suggested that Cllrs go out into community, every quarter, and be more visible</li> <li>• Find out how young people use social media</li> <li>• Community connectors, identify who they are to take messages out to community</li> </ul> <p>Rachel thanked everyone for their input. She noted the next step was to form a panel inviting marketing and engagement experts in the town as well as any interested Cllrs. Then at the Council Matters meeting in May to bring back the Strategy for approval.</p>	RG
2020/43/CM	<p>6. For approval - Financial update to 31 January 2020 Hannah Paniccia gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>Cllrs were requested to approve the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Income and expenditure sheet to 31 January 2020</li> <li>2. Balance sheet, including the breakdown of reserves at 31 January 2020</li> <li>3. Payments made over £500 between 1 October 2019 to 31 January 2020</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Lizzie Boyle, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>There was an additional recommendation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Internal Auditor reports for 1 April 2019 to 31 October 2019 and 1 November 2019 to 31 January 2020</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/44/CM	7. For decision – Improving the public toilets in Victoria Park	

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	<p>Chris Stringer provided an overview of the report. He explained that the suggested direction was refurbishing the existing toilets.</p> <p>Anne Hills voiced her concerns around vandalism and drug use and asked how we could reduce the likelihood of it happening. Chris answered that there were already timer locks on toilets, and these would be repurposed in the refurbishment. Currently the lines of sight made it easier for vandalism to take place. By moving the entrance, it would face the path and a street light.</p> <p>Sheila Gore asked what the time frame was for completing the work. Chris explained he could not be certain whether or not the work required planning permission. If it didn't, the work could begin quite swiftly.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the approach suggested in the report: designing and costing the refurbishment of the current toilets</li> <li>2. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager to organise the refurbishment of the current toilets, to be funded by the existing Earmarked Reserve</li> <li>3. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager to organise for the existing storage shed to be demolished, subject to funding</li> <li>4. If there are not sufficient funds available, return to this committee for approval of alternative ways to fund the project</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Maxine Crawley, seconded by Andy Wrintmore, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>CS</p> <p>CS</p>
<p>2020/45/CM</p>	<p><b>8. For Information - An update on the town's parks and green spaces</b></p> <p>Chris explained that due to the recent and consistent wet weather all spaces were wet and muddy. He and the Rangers were looking into how to address drainage issues, particularly on Mary Baily. A new hedge had been planted by the outdoor gym at the Showfield. Rangers were focusing on tidying areas of debris from the storms, grass cutting, and tree works at Victoria Park. A new Ranger was expected to join the team in mid-March. Chris was about to interview for the Wild about Trees Project Officer.</p> <p>Chris showed a short video about the recent Wild about Trees planting project that took place during half term at Weylands and Birchill Lane. He thanked Helen Viner for all her work setting up and coordinating the planting events and everyone who came out and planted a tree.</p>	

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	<p>Lizzie Boyle raised her concerns about how FTC’s green spaces were being used. She was concerned that with the tree planting they would eventually block sight lines and make the spaces less safe. She was having conversations within FTC and with others in the community to see how this could be addressed for the future.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion about the recent vandalism at Weylands.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked Chris if they had consulted with the residents of Weylands before the tree planting? Chris acknowledged that there should have been more communication with the residents and this lesson had been learnt and more would happen next time. In addition, the information would be out on noticeboards for longer in future.</p>	
2020/46/CM	<p>9. For information - Update on the Frome Town Hall</p> <p>Rachel Griffin gave an overview of the report. She highlighted the following pieces of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants were stable and Frome Learning Partnership had taken on an additional room</li> <li>• Rent reviews were going well</li> <li>• Meeting room spaces – discontinued unlimited free use for tenants, continuing free community use for 2 hours and tenants would likely use this offer. Community Mondays were popular but unable to offer other days due to demand</li> <li>• Weekly hirers had been established</li> <li>• Over £5k surplus predicted</li> <li>• Recruited five event support stewards</li> <li>• A few maintenance jobs had been planned such as a new boiler, fixing the leaky roof, refreshing décor, and having spring clean of the building</li> <li>• The Wedding licence had been approved and FTC were able to offer weddings from June 13, all the information was online</li> </ul>	
2020/47/CM	<p>10. For decision – Approve the updated partnership agreement between Frome Twinning Association and Frome Town Council</p> <p>Viv Whitaker provided an overview of the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to agree the proposed amendments to FTA and FTC partnership agreement and for the Mayor to sign it on behalf of FTC</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Lizzie Boyle agreed unanimously.</p> <p>There was an additional recommendation:</p>	

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	<p>2. Reconfirm the Council's commitment to maintaining a strong working relationship with partners in the twinned towns</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/48/CM	<p>11. For information - Health &amp; Safety update</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
2020/49/CM	<p>12. For information - Staff update to Council Matters February 2020</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
2020/50/CM	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 29 May 2020 at Frome Town Hall</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.47pm