

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 7pm
Zoom

Present:

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

In attendance:

Mel Usher, Martin Dimery (SCC Cllr), John Clarke (MDC/SCC Cllr), Shane Collins (MDC Cllr), Drew Gardner (MDC Cllr), Helen Kay (MDC 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), Anna Francis (Environment 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)

17 Members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2020/38/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Andy Wrintmore</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests Lizzie Boyle declared a person interest in item 6. Rich Ackroyd declared a personal interest in items 3 and 8</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 20 May 2020 The minutes of the annual meeting of Frome Town Council held on 20 May 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1d. Questions and comments Rich Ackroyd asked when it was likely for the garden waste collections to resume the regular timetable of collections. Paul Wynne said he would find out and let Cllrs and the community know.</p>	PWy
2020/39/FC	<p>2. A verbal update from Rich Ackroyd about the current status of the Missing Links project Rich Ackroyd, Chair of Missing Links, gave a presentation about the work of the group so far. He noted they currently had a bid to 'Places</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>to Ride' for £80,000 for a cycling hub and path. They had also submitted a £12,500 bid to Lottery 'Awards for All' for materials. They had a partnership project with Edventure and FTC. They were working with Sustrans, Mendip DC and Somerset CC about how to get some of the new government money for facilities in general. Recently they had been helping 'Connect Chapmanslade' to develop a link to Frome, Warminster and Westbury and providing advice for the Wincanton to Bruton plans. They had put together alternative plans for Phase 2 of the Missing Link which was the Buckland Bridge to Elliot's Lane route.</p> <p>Rich also gave a pictorial update on their work to extend a multi-user path at the land east of Whatcombe Farm Cottage through to Jack's Lane. Their next steps were to continue with the preparation work near Cooper Hall to Jack's Lane, prepare for an alternative route at the Great Elm of the Missing Link and await planning conditions from Mendip.</p>	
2020/40/FC	<p>3. For decision - Endorse the report on Local Government Reorganisation and promote it to stakeholders</p> <p>Paul Wynne proposed that FTC would remain neutral within the debate about the boundaries of any unitary arrangement. He said, the purpose of the report was about show how the parish and town councils could become part of the conversation and work with the County Council and the district councils.</p> <p>Mel Usher author of the report explained that the version at Appendix 1 had been sent to all parish and town councils in Somerset and Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) would collate all their responses. Mel explained that the parish sector was usually ignored in unitary debates around the country and this would be the first time they would be involved this early in the process.</p> <p>Mel identified seven recommendations in the report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Charter for Somerset 2. Local Ownership and devolution 3. Localism and Solutions 4. Local Governance 5. Local Presence 6. Trust and Partnership 7. Parishes Working Together <p>Mel highlighted it was important FTC monitored the debate closely to ensure the recommendations were included. The report provided a strong case for more involvement especially at the planning stage of the unitary debate as opposed to after the unitary had been agreed and established. Mel urged FTC to ensure the demands of the parishes were understood by decision makers and delivered. He</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

noted that some of the recommendations could be implemented even without unitary. When the time was right FTC would need to interpret the proposals and explore what responsibilities, assets and liabilities it would be willing to take on.

John Nelson suggested making a public statement with what FTC wanted. Mel agreed it would be a good idea and something the town would want to hear. He suggested the statement could be to say the FTC wanted to achieve the recommendations under any circumstances.

Maxine Crawley suggested that FTC looked carefully at the implications of taking on services. She also noted that it was worth taking forward the positive work after the COVID 19 emergency. Mel explained that these would be achieved at the next phase of the unitary debate once the Secretary of State had decided on the unitary boundary. However, they would need to be considered before signing any documents.

Adam Boyden explained SCC cabinet were intending to put a business case to the government in July. Adam said SCC had made it an unfair fight and found it unacceptable that they had been pursuing it during the pandemic. Paul Wynne noted FTC had been approached by SCC asking for our views. He said that if Mel's report was endorsed, FTC expected to have further discussions with SCC and the districts.

Shane Collins queried whether many services could be devolved under the Localism Act instead. He felt SCC's main driver was debt mainly due to the costs of providing social care. He was unconvinced of the need for change and had yet to see an academic paper showing savings from other unitary authorities. Mel said it was not difficult to transfer service delivery and that it was just a matter of will. He concurred with Shane that he hadn't seen how savings could be achieved in the SCC proposals.

Max Wide said that a devolution package would be a deal between the parish council and the new unitary and by taking on service delivery the parish needed to show how it could give a better outcome for the community. FTC would need to be clear about what they wanted to achieve with those powers.

Martin Dimery explained David Fothergill's intention was to have regional planning boards and community networks, however, only unitary Cllrs would get right to vote. He felt that would be a mistake as all should get their voice heard.

The recommendations were:

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>1. Endorse the report at Appendix 1</p> <p>2. Delegate to the Town Clerk with the Leader, deputy Leader and Cllr Ackroyd to take the next steps as described in the report above.</p> <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWy/AH/ MC/RA</p>
<p>2020/41/FC</p>	<p>4. For information – 2019/20 Work Programme – end of year review</p> <p>Kate Hellard presented an overview of the report on behalf of all the managers.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd said it had been a pleasure working with all staff. He felt supported entirely and staff had been wonderful. Anita Collier also endorsed Rich’s sentiments.</p> <p>Lenka Grimes asked whether there were plans in place for reopening the Town Hall? Paul Wynne explained that following government guidance did not allow for reopening at that stage. A plan had been put together for when and how staff could return to the Town Hall but would only be implemented when it was safe to do so. Lenka thanked Paul for the clarification and FTC for keeping the open spaces so well looked after as she had been enjoying them so much.</p>	
<p>2020/42/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision – Further improvements to the area around Boyle Cross, Market Place</p> <p>Nick Dove and Jane Llewellyn presented the two options as detailed in the report.</p> <p>Adam Boyden indicated that after speaking with the Leader of MDC, their plan was to transfer ownership of the Boyle Cross area to FTC. The option would be discussed at the cabinet meeting on 6 July. Paul Wynne explained FTC were aware of this and were interested to see the proposals</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle asked if other funding options for things such as planting had been looked into? Jane said it was something that could be looked into. Given the timescales it would be preferable to know the project could be paid for as a whole. Sponsorship could be explored once things were in place.</p> <p>Paul Horton said he felt the space was visually attractive just underused. He was concerned FTC would be rushing to a solution before going through all the options.</p> <p>Sheila Gore asked what decision about the project would return to council? Paul explained it would be approval of the design. If there</p>	<p>JL</p>

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>was a contingency budget in phase 2 then approval of expenditure would not be required.</p> <p>Jane emphasised the importance of good planning and design and was aware that Cllrs hoped to deliver the scheme during Phase II of the Market Place project</p> <p>Mark Dorrington asked Jane if any of the plans would need to go to planning? Jane explained that the preliminary advice from the conservation officer was that permission was not needed. However, she would need to check with MDC. It was unlikely formal planning permission would be required, more likely a certificate of lawfulness.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the principle of further landscape improvements to the Boyle Cross area as described in the report 2. Take option 1 and delegate to the Planning and Development Manager, in consultation with Cllr Dove, to progress the scheme as far as possible within the constraints of the existing project budget for Phase II of the Market Place. 3. Return to Council for further approvals if necessary. <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Rob Collett, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>JL JL</p>
<p>2020/43/FC</p>	<p>6. For decision - Environmental Resilience Transport and Energy Proposal Sara Butler left the meeting at 8.39pm</p> <p>Anna Francis gave a presentation highlighting the various aspects of her report.</p> <p>John Nelson said he fully endorsed the cycling proposals. He had concerns about signing a letter of support to FRECo and suggested removing the recommendation.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle explained that having FTC's support would help FRECo to open the door to conversations with landowners. Maxine Crawley noted that an amazing amount of work had already been done. She felt the recommendation should be kept in as it reflected a part of FTC's Strategy.</p> <p>Rachel Griffin communicated positive comments from Peter Macfadyen, Martin Dimery and Shane Collins.</p> <p>There was a discussion about funding the projects. There was also a discussion about adding some funding from the general reserves to</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>help boost the resilience work. Paul Wynne strongly advised Cllrs not to dip into reserves until the financial impact of COVID 19 was clear</p> <p>John Nelson proposed to remove recommendation 5, the motion was not carried.</p> <p>John Nelson proposed to change the wording of recommendation 5: “Sign a letter of ‘introduction’ rather than of “support”, seconded by Rob Collett, agreed by majority.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve funding for the Connecting Stonebridge cycle route. Budget: £20,000 from existing resilience budget. 2. Commission detailed proposals for four other areas to enable the council to secure funding from Somerset and national government to implement. Budget: £2,000 from existing resilience budget. 3. Explore funding opportunities for a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 4. Support the Walking and Cycling Manifesto 5. Sign the letter of introduction to link FRECo with local landowners to explore opportunities for wind <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Adam Palmer, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Nick Dove left the meeting at 9. 24pm.</p>	
2020/44/FC	<p>7. For decision – S106 funds for a natural flood management project upstream of Wallbridge</p> <p>Chris Stringer provided an overview and the proposed project. He reminded Cllrs that FTC’s role was to approve whether the s106 money could be applied for by the partnership. Chris indicated that the project provided a clear benefit to the town.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the use of the S106 funds from the Southfield Farm development for the project as described by the Somerset Frome Partnership</p> <p>Proposed by Rob Collett, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/45/FC	<p>8. For decision – Adopting Friends of the River Frome’s 2020 to 2030 strategy for the river</p> <p>Chris Stringer provided an overview of the report. Cllrs had been positive at the request from Friends of the River Frome to adopt the plan when Simon Keyes had presented at the last council meeting.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>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</p> <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/46/FC	<p>9. For decision – Resuming the calendar of meetings for 2020/21 Laura Flaherty summarised the report. In addition, it was agreed to make the Council meeting on 15 July a Council Matters Committee meeting instead. Also, to swap the Council and Council Matters Committee meetings around in September, the dates to remain unchanged.</p> <p>The recommendations were: 1. Agree to resume the calendar of meetings for 2020/21 2. Agree the start time of Town Matters Committee meetings of 7.15pm</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Maxine Crawley, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/47/FC	<p>10. For information - Health & Safety update Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
2020/48/FC	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 9 September (venue to be confirmed)</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.37pm