

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 7pm
Zoom

Present:

Councillors: Rich 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, Andy Wrintmore (Chair)

In attendance:

Jill Loader (Census Engagement Manager), PC Simon Humphrey, John Clarke (MDC/SCC Cllr), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development and Regeneration Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Kate Hellard (Community Development 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
2020/65/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>The Mayor, Anita Collier, was feeling unwell and proposed Andy Wrintmore to Chair, seconded by John Nelson, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Andy took the Chair and introduced the meeting.</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 18 November 2020 Rob Collett was added to the list of Cllrs present as he had been mistakenly left off.</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 18 November 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Andy Palmer, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/66/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Nick Dove was disappointed by Highways policy not to offer feedback on complaints after he had an issue with a footpath at Packsaddle.</p>	

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	<p>He also called for better communications from MDC with regard to the business support grants, particularly as a number of shops had closed in Palmer Street. Nick thanked the Rangers for installing the bench at the bottom of Catherine Hill, he had heard a number of positive comments.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle raised the issue of speeding traffic along Culverhill and noted that she and other Cllrs were in the process of joining the community speedwatch team.</p> <p>Sara Butler was concerned about the temporary closure of the footpath under the railway bridge at Rodden Meadow. Paul Wynne confirmed Anita Collier had written to Network Rail asking if pedestrian access could be maintained during the works, ensuring they would make good after the repairs and whether they could stop work at the weekends. Chris Stringer was chasing for an answer.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd asked if volunteers could be employed to steward the markets on a Saturday to enable them to reopen? Peter Wheelhouse confirmed he was exploring possibilities with the events manager at MDC to get the market going again. There was an opportunity for further dialogue and he was waiting for further information on logistics.</p> <p>A member of the public, Emma King, provided information about the ‘Save St Andrew’s ward’ campaign which was a mental health ward in Wells that was at risk of closure. Cllrs were supportive of the campaign. Paul Wynne asked Emma to draft a letter which he would sign on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>John Clarke informed the meeting that the Saxonvale planning application was going to the meeting of the MDC planning board the next week. He was still concerned about the level of affordable housing. He also noted that Active & In Touch had been awarded the Frome Times community group of the year and applauded all charities who had worked tirelessly throughout the last year. Finally, he noted that the SCC regulation committee had unanimously rejected an application to reopen the quarry.</p>	<p>PWy</p>
<p>2020/67/FC</p>	<p>3. A verbal update from Jill Loader, Census Engagement Manager Jill noted the next census would take place on 21 March and was a once in a decade opportunity to get a snapshot of life in the UK. The data collected be used to plan for future policy.</p> <p>Anne Hills asked if they had collected data about older people without children. She was also concerned about digital exclusion. Jill said she would enquire on behalf of Anne. She was aware of</p>	

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	<p>exclusion in Somerset, and there were projects running with the Citizens Advice to help. They would be setting up support centres.</p>	
2020/68/FC	<p>4. For decision - Work programme, budget and precept demand for 2020/21</p> <p>Paul Wynne, Peter Wheelhouse and Sarah Williams gave a comprehensive summary of the work programme, staffing, budget and precept.</p> <p>Work programme</p> <p>John Nelson asked how staff prioritised work to be included in the work programme? Peter Wheelhouse noted this was ultimately a job for the Cllr body. Paul Wynne noted he was confident that the work programme could be delivered. Paul suggested that he could explore evaluation methods that would help evaluate impact of various parts of the work programme.</p> <p>Paul Horton wanted the environment area of work spread throughout the work programme. He felt FTC needed to step up and show leadership.</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>John Nelson queried whether it was necessary to make the recommended posts permanent? Sarah Williams explained that temporary contracts run to a maximum of 102 weeks, if the job is retained the staff member is required to be on a permanent contract. Paul Wynne also noted that FTC wanted to retain quality staff and making their posts was permanent helped with this.</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>John Nelson was concerned the justification for the rise in the precept was not strong enough. Scott Ward felt Cllrs should keep in mind what they were trying to achieve. He hoped the residents would see they had tried to keep it at a reasonable level without compromising. Rich Ackroyd also noted it as the only part of council tax that was spent in Frome. It meant FTC were able to respond to the pandemic because of being properly funded.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note that it is impossible to plan ahead for 2021/22 with complete certainty, especially during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and that the work programme for 2021/22 can be amended by Council if need be. <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Approve the work programme for 2021/22. 	

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	<p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed by majority.</p> <p>3. Note there is sufficient budget allocation to cover forecast staff costs</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Andy Palmer, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>4. Approve the proposed staff structure for 2021/22</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed by majority.</p> <p>5. Approve the additional forecast Earmarked Reserves at 1 April 2021</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Lizzie Boyle, agreed by majority.</p> <p>6. Approve the forecast General Reserve of est. £224k at 1 April 2021</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Scott Ward, agreed by majority.</p> <p>7. Approve the precept demand of £1,802,305</p> <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed by majority.</p>	
2020/69/FC	<p>5. For decision – Further improvements to the area around Boyle Cross, Market Place Jane Llewellyn summarised the report.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the design, some liked it others didn't. There was also a discussion about funding.</p> <p>Jane explained there would be some time to work on the design as approval was still needed from MDC and a certificate of lawful development still had to be issued which could take 6 weeks or longer.</p> <p>Nick Dove proposed an amendment to recommendation 2 to amend the budget to £19k, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed by majority.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <p>1. Agree to proceed with Quote 1 – from KAM Engineering</p>	

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	<p>2. Agree a budget of £19k (including 10% contingency) from the Saxonvale EMR</p> <p>3. Delegate to the Planning and Development Manager, in consultation with Cllr Dove, to progress the scheme as far as possible subject to obtaining the necessary approvals</p> <p>4. Return to Council for further approvals if necessary.</p> <p>AH requested a recorded vote. However, due to technical difficulties the Clerk was unable to do this via the video link..</p> <p>Proposed by John Nelson, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed by majority. Anne Hills voted against the recommendations</p>	
2020/70/FC	<p>6. For decision - Calendar of meetings 2021/22 Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the calendar of meetings for 2021/22.</p> <p>Proposed by Lizzie Boyle, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2020/71/FC	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 17 March 2021, on Zoom</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.50pm