

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council Matters Committee

Wednesday 30 June 2021, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present at Frome Town Hall:

Councillors: Rich Ackroyd, Sara Butler, Mark Dorrington (Deputy Chair), Nick Dove, Sheila Gore

Present on Zoom:

Councillors: Maxine Crawley, Anne Hills, Andy Palmer, John Nelson, Andy Wrintmore

In attendance at Frome Town Hall and on Zoom:

Cllr Steve Tanner, Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Beccy Byrne (Marketing and Communications Officer), Veronica Wignall (Climate Action Researcher/Evaluator), Hannah Paniccia (Finance Officer), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

1 member of the public at Frome Town Hall

2 members of the public on Zoom

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2021/21/CM	<p>1. For decision - To delegate to the Town Clerk any decisions made informally by the committee at this meeting</p> <p>Deputy Chair, Mark Dorrington read the following statement:</p> <p><i>“We want to make our council and committee meetings available to as many people as possible, regardless of where they are - virtually and in person. We also need to make sure those who attend meetings here in the Council Chamber are as safe as possible.</i></p> <p><i>We’re still getting used to having meetings with people both on person and those zooming in, so please bear with us if it feels a crunchy at times.</i></p> <p><i>These hybrid meetings will, technically, be informal because the Government has not brought forward legislation to enable us to continue to operate virtually. But, we will run them as if they were formal; they have been advertised and as you can see we still have agendas and reports, discussion and votes, and minutes will be taken.</i></p>	

	<p><i>Legally, only the Cllrs present in person will be able to vote which is a bit exclusive and unsatisfactory, so to ensure all Cllrs can vote we have to delegate to our Town Clerk to carry out the informal decisions made by Cllrs tonight. Otherwise, we'll be running the meeting in the usual way with everyone chipping in as we go along. “</i></p> <p>The recommendation was to delegate to the Town Clerk to implement the decisions this committee makes informally at the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2021/22/CM	<p>2a. Apologies for absence Received from Ali Barclay, Lizzie Boyle and Rob Collett.</p> <p>2b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 5 May 2021 The minutes of the Council Matters Committee meeting held on 5 May 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2021/23/CM	<p>3. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Bob Ashford voiced his concerns over the residents parking scheme for Weymouth Road and that no one had been consulted on the scheme that was going forward. He asked if there was anything FTC could do? Paul Wynne was asked to write to the Chief Executive of SCC in light of the discussion and to explore what could be done.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd praised the recent bike jumble and thanked everyone involved.</p>	PWY
2021/24/CM	<p>4. For information - Marketing and Communications Update Beccy Byrne gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>She noted that the new website was performing well and sessions had increased since the introduction of FIND. The Discover Frome website had seen a steady increase in traffic since restrictions lifted and was still in the top for google searches.</p>	

	<p>With regard to the social channels audiences had been responding well to the lighter touch which had seen an increase in engagement. People had been responding well to the Mayor's page and the People's Budget videos, in particular. The profile of the town had increased due to 'Escape to the Country' featuring the community fridge. The reinstated Discover Frome Instagram and Facebook had seen an increase of 10% in visitors.</p> <p>Sara Butler thanked the comms team for all their hard work.</p>	
2021/25/CM	<p>5. For discussion & decision – Improving our evaluation of the Council's work</p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse introduced evaluation and the importance to FTC work, including identifying who was supported, unlock other funding and where we could improve. Peter explained the difference between outcomes and outputs and how they were different to measure.</p> <p>Veronica introduced the three questions Cllrs were asked to consider for discussion:</p> <p>1. What are the outcomes of interest for FTC?</p> <p>John Nelson felt that FTC should demonstrate good value for money. He said it should be considered across the board not just for specific projects.</p> <p>Anne Hills made a plea that the outcomes were not be all about finance but also happiness. She noted it was hard to measure but there were good examples of studies in Denmark. She felt it should be an outcome to build a town that is happier.</p> <p>Sara Butler spoke about the process that applies to any subject. Need to establish broad series of baselines. She agreed with Anne and asked that a large amount was on qualitative work.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd felt the formula for the outcome was also important, data should be put into a report. Make the data easy to access and be helpful for future funding opportunities.</p> <p>2. Should we pursue an 'evaluation trial' around 2 or 3 selected activities or develop an evaluation strategy to embed an evaluation component in all appropriate activities?</p> <p>Sara Butler felt that the model would work well if using a couple of projects.</p>	

	<p>Sheila Gore felt getting a cross section of the community was always most difficult and would be interested to understand how this would be done.</p> <p>There was a discussion about what forms of measurement to use and the types of projects to evaluate.</p> <p>3.What activities are a priority to evaluate?</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd suggested starting with the work programme and doing a town wide survey to find out what people's perceptions were. He felt it could highlight objectives and what should be concentrated on. Sara Butler said she would be wary of this strategy as the response rates were usually quite low.</p> <p>Peter explained the plan was to come back to the next meeting with specific proposals. He said there was a need to think about capacity to do research and evaluation as it is resource intensive.</p> <p>The working group would comprise of Anne Hills, John Nelson, Lizzie Boyle and Sara Butler, plus one or two staff members.</p> <p>The recommendation was to delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with a small group of councillors with expertise in evaluation to prepare some costed evaluation proposals based on the outcome of discussion at this meeting and to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Sheila Gore, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWh
2021/26/CM	<p>6. For decision – Using herbicides containing glyphosate to treat Japanese knotweed on Council land</p> <p>Paul Wynne summarised the report on behalf of Chris Stringer.</p> <p>Sheila Gore suggested that it needed to be made clear the use of glyphosate was being done in a protective way.</p> <p>Sara Butler asked why the removal could not be done by hand? Paul explained that that method would be fine for small areas, but the area in question was rather large. Small scale hand weeding would be done in future years to keep on top of new growth.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed their discomfort but the majority agreed that it was necessary in the circumstances.</p>	

	<p>Paul explained that the proposal for the use of glyphosate would be a one off. If the weed came back a report would need to come back to committee for approval. He hoped there might be other options in the future. He noted he would ask Chris Stringer to speak with SCC about their use of a weed machine and explore if the removal on the riverbank could be added to the MDC contract for its removal at Saxonvale.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <p>Sheila Gore proposed amending recommendation 1 to include Welshmill and Henley Way specifically.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the use of herbicides containing glyphosate for the management and chemical control of Japanese knotweed identified on the riverbanks at Welshmill and Henley Way <p>Seconded by Nick Dove, agreed by majority.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Record that that this use is an exception to the Council's continuing policy of not using products containing glyphosate on FTC land 3. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager and the Lead Ranger to oversee contracts with companies to manage the knotweed 4. Delegate responsibility to the Environment Manager and the Lead Ranger to ensure that safe working practices are adopted at all times when managing knotweed <p>The revised recommendation one and the remaining three were then considered. Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed by majority. Sara Butler abstained.</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>CS</p> <p>CS</p>
2021/27/CM	<p>7. For information - An update on the town's parks and green spaces Paul Wynne gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked what was happening at Chapman's Close. Rich Ackroyd noted residents had been invited to talk to FTC's Wild About Trees project officer, Helen Viner. There were also other ways of residents engaging with plans which Rich said he would email to Nick.</p> <p>Andy Jones asked what was happening after the poll on where to plant blossom trees in the town. Rachel said she hoped to bring a report to the next committee. The plan was to plant in October, in order to do something in conjunction with Apple Day.</p>	<p>RA</p>

2021/28/CM	<p>8. For information - Earmarked Reserves Sarah Williams gave a comprehensive report of the ear marked reserves held by FTC to date.</p> <p>John Clarke asked about the s106 agreement for Foundary Barton and who decided where and how the money was spent? Mark Dorrington noted he and Chris Stringer were meeting with the residents to decide how to spend the money. Paul Wynne noted s106 money did not always come to FTC, some was held by MDC. However, he noted FTC would always ensure the money was spent before any agreement expired.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd felt MDC sometimes got away with paltry amounts of s106 money. He asked if Cllr John Clarke could ensure MDC insisted on decent amounts of money that were not tied to specific projects from future developments.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked what the outcome was in terms of the amount of council tax payers there would be after the pandemic. Sarah Williams explained that the numbers of residents paying would probably not be as high as the current year as more people would probably be on some form of income support, but the official figures would be known soon.</p>	
2021/29/CM	<p>9. For approval - Financial update to 31 May 2021 Sarah Williams summarised the report.</p> <p>The recommendations were to approve the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income and expenditure sheet to 31 May 2021 2. Payments made over £500 for April 2021 to May 2021 3. Balance sheet including the breakdown of reserves at 31 May 2021 <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2021/30/CM	<p>10. For information - Update on the Frome Town Hall Rachel Griffin provided a summary of the report.</p> <p>Rachel made special mention of the huge effort by Sarah Williams and Sean Powell to get the technology working to enable hybrid council and committee meetings to go ahead.</p>	
2021/31/CM	<p>11. For information - Health & Safety update Cllrs noted the report.</p>	
2021/32/CM	<p>12. For information – Update on staff matters Cllrs noted the report.</p>	

	<p>Rich Ackroyd asked what iHASCO was? Sarah Williams explained it was online training comprising short courses on numerous subjects. Rich noted how fantastic it was for FTC to offer so much training to staff, and it was a credit to the managers.</p> <p>Sarah noted that Tricia Mugridge was taking flexible retirement and taking on the role of Volunteer Co Ordinator at the Discover Frome Information Point. Sarah thanked Susan and Pamela, who were stepping down from the role, for all their work.</p>	
2021/33/CM	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 8 September 2021, Frome Town Hall and Zoom.	

Table 1 - Agenda items

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.42pm