

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 22 September 2021, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

Councillors present at Town Hall: Rich Ackroyd, Mark Dorrington, Sheila Gore, Paul Horton, Andy Wrintmore

Councillors present on Zoom: Lizzie Boyle, Maxine Crawley, Rob Collett, Anne Hills, John Nelson, Andy Palmer

In attendance:

Emma Reynolds (Frome College Principal), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business 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)

2 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall

0 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2021/35/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7.01pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Ali Barclay, Sara Butler, Anita Collier, Nick Dove and Scott Ward.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 14 July 2021 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 14 July 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2021/36/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Rich Ackroyd asked Emma Reynolds why the 'Last Tree Dreaming' tree had been removed from the College's grounds? Emma explained that a recent survey had revealed it was unsafe. The half that had been removed had been situated under the hedge. Students were now using the area more often and</p>	

	<p>were appreciating being able to see the art closer up. The College were reviewing the next phase of its life.</p>	
2021/37/FC	<p>2. Presentation from Emma Reynolds, Principal of Frome College</p> <p>Emma's presentation focused on Frome College during the Coronavirus pandemic. She said that when the country went into lockdown they kept a focus on the positives. She said they found an enormous sense of community. For example, the Rotary Club funded hot food and they received lots of donations including uniform and laptops. Those students who continued to attend school benefitted and their attendance went up. Students felt able to talk more openly about mental and emotional health.</p> <p>Their focus for the future was raising the standard of facilities on site particularly for the STEM subjects. Emma explained they were looking into ways of funding this. They were also focusing on supporting students to catch up and progress and getting back to College life as it was by bringing back events in music and arts.</p> <p>Emma noted the College was celebrating its centenary during September with Emma being the 7th principal in 100 years. As part of the celebrations every member of staff had been given £100 to invest in a centenary project. Three projects had been chosen, rewilding on the school site, environment and recycling incl. water fountains, and developing outdoor spaces.</p> <p>Emma explained how they were looking at ways to continue virtual learning opportunities. For example, for poorly children. They were going to continue virtual parents evening in a hybrid way as this worked best for the majority. Technology had also helped teachers to connect across the schools.</p> <p>Emma said how interesting it was post pandemic how the students are now challenging the status quo. For example, they were in the process of reviewing the school uniforms and the students were vocalising their opinions and also wanted to understand things such as where it would be sourced. Emma saw things like this as positive challenges to school life. The pandemic had highlighted the value of College including having someone to talk to, friendship and engagement.</p> <p>Cllrs thanked Emma for her presentation and for all her hard work at the College.</p>	

	<p>Andy Jones asked Emma what help the College were looking for from the community. Emma listed work experience placements, vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities, practical support like uniform, equipment, text books, musical instruments and any help preparing for the centenary garden party in 2022.</p> <p>Paul Wynne asked Emma her thoughts on future expansion as there was continually more planned housing for Frome but still only one College. Emma said she felt there was a conversation to be had around the use of the College site as it was big and had the potential for more buildings. She felt though a satellite school might be the best way forward, as with more housing they would likely be further away from the College site. Or otherwise a separate sixth form with better vocational facilities. She explained she had raised this issue with SCC and there were some good ideas on the table. She said parents needed choice and it would be an important opportunity for the community to be involved.</p>	
2021/38/FC	<p>4. A presentation to mark the centenary of Frome College To mark the centenary of Frome College, Mayor of Frome, Andy Wrintmore presented a certificate to Emma on behalf of Frome Town Council. Emma thanked Andy and FTC and said the certificate would be hung in the reception area of the College.</p>	
2021/39/FC	<p>5. For decision – Unitary Somerset update and to decide whether to work with the other Mendip towns over devolutions of some assets and liabilities A summary of the report was given by Maxine Crawley and Paul Wynne.</p> <p>On the question of the date of the next elections and the SALC consultation to find the view of Somerset parishes, Anne Hills noted that the majority of parish councils co-opted Cllrs rather than had elections, so the decision was immaterial to those parishes. Anne asked Paul how many other Councils were like FTC in needing to have an election? Paul said he did not know the answer but would find out from SALC. Anne also asked was the process one parish council got one vote. Paul explained the conversations so far were that the unitary team hoped to see a consensus in favour one or the other and that this would be forwarded to Government.</p> <p>John Nelson said he couldn't see the justification for changing the cycle. He felt FTC should be careful about what was taken on in terms of assets and FTC needed to negotiate for power.</p>	PWY

	<p>Rich Ackroyd said he felt FTC should have a bigger proportional vote. He said he wanted to see his four years out and finish what they had started. Rich asked what would happen to MDC when the shadow council came in. Paul explained that after the elections in May 2022 the new Cllrs would work with MDC staff to create the unitary council.</p> <p>Andy Jones felt there would be a risk if FTC was not aligned to the cycle of other councils and could find an election in May 2023 would have a disappointing turnout.</p> <p>Cllr discussed concerns about new Cllrs not having a sufficient handover and being overwhelmed by more experienced Cllrs.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle felt that combining elections would see a bigger turnout of voters and £15k was a lot of money for others in the community. She said she was not comfortable to say the money was for our own special election. She wanted to focus on the positives, namely a chance for Cllrs to work together on shaping the new unitary council.</p> <p>Andy Palmer said he did not see any good publicity to come out of a decision to keep the election in 2023. The £15k could go to a good community project. He felt a fresh group of Cllrs could be the ones to take the unitary council forward.</p> <p>Sheila Gore felt the issue being discussed was about the next generation of FTC Cllrs being well supported. She felt there was potential for experienced Cllrs to support the new Cllrs.</p> <p>The first recommendation was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To decide whether to respond in favour of bring forward the next FTC election to May 2022 or to respond in favour of retaining the four year cycle. <p>After some discussion no Cllr proposed this recommendation.</p> <p>Andy Wrintmore proposed that:</p> <p>FTC's preference was to keep the date of the next election in May 2023</p> <p>This was seconded by Paul Horton, agreed by majority.</p> <p>Fours Cllrs voted against: Maxine Crawley, Anne Hills, Lizzie Boyle and Andy Palmer. Sheila Gore abstained.</p>	
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	<p>The second recommendation was:</p> <p>2. Continue with the due diligence exercise around assets and liabilities and work with the other Mendip towns and Mendip DC to explore whether some Mendip assets and liabilities (to be determined by Council) could be transferred before the dissolution of Mendip.</p> <p>Proposed by Rich Ackroyd, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2021/40/FC	<p>6. For Discussion - Fundraiser support A summary of the report was given by Kate Hellard.</p> <p>John Nelson asked if the fundraiser would be an additional staff member? Kate explained the person or persons would be freelance.</p> <p>In her summary, Kate had mentioned there was lots of funding available, Sheila Gore asked where that information had come from? Kate explained grants currently available were from the Lottery, Awards for All, Arts Council, the Community Renewal Fund to name just a few. FTC were now eligible for more grants when they hadn't been before. However, she noted there was lots of competition, so FTC needed to submit strong applications. The grants would be to support the way of working and therefore also supported FTC's partner organisations. Kate noted that previous grants had funded important elements of the work programme but had required a lot of staff time, hence the proposals to recruit a freelance fundraiser.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle felt grants should be about working with the community and for the community. She also felt it was important to work collaboratively with the surrounding parishes.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd said he liked the idea of identifying specific projects to externally fund and felt it was a useful exercise.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington said it would be helpful to communicate when new staff had been brought on board it because FTC had the funding. He said FTC should ensure projects were really worthwhile.</p>	

	<p>Andy Jones said a fundraiser would bring extra capacity but would also need great deal of download of information from staff. Kate agreed. However, officer time would be saved in filling out the application which was very time consuming and a skill that a fundraiser would bring.</p> <p>Kate explained that a budget of £15k for contracting a fundraiser had already been allocated in the annual budget. She said she expected this to be spent in the next six months. Kate said it was about having the right fundraiser to do the right applications for the right projects.</p>	
2021/41/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 17 November 2021, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

Table 1 - Agenda items

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.37pm