

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 13 July 2022, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Sara Butler (Chair), Philip Campagna, Carla Collenette, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Polly Lamb, Steve Tanner, Mel Usher, Max Wide, Andy Wrintmore

On Zoom: Ben Still

In attendance:

Paul Oster (Mayday Saxonvale), Iona Fitzgerald (Citizens Advice Mendip), Adam Boyden (MDC Cllr), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Kate Hellard (Community Development Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

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

3 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom

At 4 August the recorded meeting on YouTube had been viewed 180 times

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2022/38/FC	<p>Meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Andy Jones proposed to accept apologies from Fiona Barrows and Lisa Merryweather and from Ben Still who attended on Zoom. Seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 18 May 2022 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 18 May 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair. Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed by majority.</p>	
2022/39/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs Max Wide arrived at 7.05pm Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.07pm</p>	

	<p>Antony Bowring asked FTC to challenge police on presence in the town. Nick Dove explained Paul Wynne, Town Clerk, has monthly meetings with the police. There was a dedicated neighbourhood team based in Frome. He urged any crimes to be reported as the police could only respond to reported incidents. Nationally there had been cuts to police numbers. He noted that crime and anti-social behaviour was relatively low in Frome. There was a brief discussion about police response times to 999 calls and targets. Nick offered to meet Anthony outside of the meeting to discuss further. Mel Usher suggested inviting the police to attend a future council meeting.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd asked about the progress of any asset/open space transfers from MDC. Discussions with MDC were ongoing. Max Wide also noted that FTC was trying to construct a proposition and were identifying key assets to present to SCC for consideration.</p> <p>Gill Fone thanked FTC for allowing the Foundary Barton residents jubilee party. She noted a silver birch tree had died and one needed some maintenance. The recent wildlife planting did not work likely because it was a shady area. She explained one of the Rangers had suggested a bluebell wood which she felt would be good. The residents also wanted to plant a magnolia as a jubilee tree.</p> <p>Gill queried why the Farmers Market was moving to the Boyle Cross? Rachel Griffin explained FTC and C&G were both supporting the market, the move was mostly about increasing visibility.</p>	<p>PWY</p>
<p>2022/40/FC</p>	<p>3. A short presentation from the Mayday Saxonvale team Paul Oster, Director, gave a presentation. He explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayday were a not-for-profit social enterprise – no shareholders. • Their objective was to develop the Saxonvale site for the benefit of the community of Frome. • And to provide a new model of development that puts the community in the driving seat. <p>They had partnered with Stories who had experience and knew how to deliver large scale developments. They also would provide the funding required. They would help maximise the social value.</p> <p>Paul explained their vision was:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A balanced, mixed-use, town centre extension • The employment space that Frome needs to thrive • Affordable housing above policy requirement • Distinctive residential neighbourhoods • Preservation of historic buildings • Community owned assets • Public squares and green infrastructure • Pedestrian priority • Respond to climate emergency <p>Their model was to minimise developer profit but maximise opportunity which ultimately gave maximum community value.</p> <p>Their next steps were to obtain planning permission from MDC and purchase the Saxonvale site from MDC. Paul explained that MDC were now willing to have a conversation where previously they weren't.</p> <p>A member of public was interested in their community bond offering and how accessible it would be. Paul explained that they were considering £50 - £100 to be the minimum buy in.</p> <p>Mel Usher asked how they planned to stitch it altogether, especially since MDC overpaid in the first place. Paul explained that their belief was there was a deal to be done with MDC. The Mayday scheme was of a higher value, economically and for employment. This was the scheme Frome wanted, it was policy compliant, addresses the Local Plan and was the best consideration for the land.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked about the social value. Paul noted their scheme was financially better for MDC. He said it was MDC's role to do the best for their constituents. Delivering a scheme against residents wishes is something they would have to be accountable for.</p> <p>Steve Tanner commented that it was a positive development that MDC were willing to engage now. Paul said he had been led to understand they were waiting for the outcome of the planning application, but they were taking it as a positive. Also the s106 agreement was ready to go and MDC had not yet actioned it. Ultimately Frome had been clear on its preference.</p>	
<p>2022/41/FC</p>	<p>4. For discussion - Cost of Living Crisis: A Town Council Response</p> <p>Kate Hellard gave a summary of the report.</p>	

	<p>She explained that the work was going to take a lot of time and resources. It wasn't about just long term unemployed; it would also include those that were unable to make ends meet. Unfortunately many never thought they would end up in this position. Kate said as a parish council FTC could only scratch the surface but did feel obliged to do something. Fair Frome was a successful example of support offered by FTC in the past.</p> <p>Iona Fitzgerald, Advice Session Supervisor for Citizens Advice Mendip gave a short presentation. Iona noted that out of the top fifteen wards of where clients lived, five were in Frome, with Keyford and Market always in the top three. This meant 35% of CAM clients lived in Frome.</p> <p>From January to June in 2022 CAM had helped 588 residents with 2,159 issues. 59% of those clients had long term health conditions/disabilities. 75% came for advice about welfare benefits particularly Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The common debt issue was council tax arrears. In more positive news CAM had secured £100k of income for Frome residents and had had £20k of debts written off. Statistics from Home Finder Somerset demonstrated that there is not enough social housing.</p> <p>She noted they were trying to extend their advice availability and also have a specialist advisor for issues with MDC such as council tax.</p> <p>Adam Boyden asked if the protocol for council tax debts was working or would Iona recommend MDC do anything differently. She had quarterly meetings with officers at MDC. They were now concentrating on new policies at unitary and to set up new protocols. Carla Collenette asked MDC Cllrs to push MDC to make council tax discounts 100% rather than the current 80% for those on low incomes. Adam said he would ask.</p> <p>Those in the room then broke off into small groups to discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do we think we know about the issue locally? 2. Where can we find sufficient local and recent data to allow us to be confident of our next steps? 3. Where can we identify local stories that will bring each theme to life? 4. Which partners should we be working with, and can we together identify the gaps in provision? 5. How do we engage with the town and individuals who are currently having problems so that we don't initiate misguided proposals? 	
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	<p>The results from the discussion were:</p> <p>Food - Fair Frome is a partner that we should continue to work with. Demand for their services has increased although donations have fallen. We should contact professional services such as Frome Medical Practice as part of our community engagement on this issue.</p> <p>Housing – Houses should be for local people, the Local Community Network (LCN) could be used for lobbying, FTC should be working with housing developers, more pressure on developers for the right amount of social housing and engaging with the public on consultations.</p> <p>Economy – Frome has a rural economy, there was an increasing demand on income, stories from Fair Frome and others should be shared. Focus on engagement and co ordination.</p> <p>Transport - highly dependent on private cars because of poor public transport, consider informal car sharing schemes.</p> <p>Energy – focus on energy efficiency in homes, particularly rented. Frome renters alliance meeting at C&G about making properties more efficient.</p> <p>Mel Usher commented that the job was to talk to everyone in town. To help one another. There was a need to prioritise affordable housing which might come ahead of environmental issues.</p>	
<p>2022/42/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision - Refurbishment of toilets at Victoria Park Mark Dorrington summarised the report.</p> <p>Viv Whitaker and Mark Dorrington would feedback after the meeting as to why some of the other options raised in the meeting were not being taken forward.</p> <p>Adam Boyden asked if MDC had come back about the ‘Changing Places’ proposal. Viv explained that she had not heard anything despite approaching ‘Changing Places’ directly as well. Adam said he would find out more from MDC.</p> <p>Andy Jones proposed a revised recommendation:</p> <p>To go out to tender for the refurbishment of the Victoria Park toilets and to return to Cllrs with a proposal for project funding once costs are known.</p>	<p>Adam Boyden</p>

	<p>Seconded by Anita Collier, agreed by majority</p> <p>The revised recommendation above was proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed by majority.</p>	
2022/43/FC	<p>6. For decision - Proposal to offer 'Cycle to Work' scheme for Councillors Nick Dove summarised the report.</p> <p>It was noted three Cllrs were interested in taking up the offer. At the end of the rental period the Cllr would own the bike.</p> <p>The recommendation was:</p> <p>To authorise the Business Manager to facilitate a 'Cycle to Work' scheme for Cllrs use up to a maximum amount of £3,000 per e-bike. The budget to be used is General Reserves, noting that the impact after 3 years on the General Reserve is financially neutral.</p> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed by majority.</p>	
2022/44/FC	<p>7. For decision – Appointing the membership and deputy chair of the Planning Committee Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <p>1. Membership of the Planning Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy Jones • Mark Dorrington • Philip Campagna • Tracey Ashford • Polly Lamb <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>2. Election of the Deputy Chair</p> <p>Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy Jones 	

	Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.	
2022/45/FC	<p>8. For ratification – Representation on Board of Trustees of Thynne Educational Foundation Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to ratify the decision to nominate Philip Campagna as FTC’s representative on the Board of Trustees of the Thynne Educational Foundation</p> <p>Proposed by Mel Usher, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2022/46/FC	<p>9. For information – Update on staff matters Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>Gill Fone asked about the recruitment for Chris Stringer’s role, Environment Manager. Laura Flaherty explained they were taking the time to consider whether a like for like replacement was the best fit or to amend the role. However, Chris’ area of work would be staffed.</p>	
2022/47/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 10 August 2022, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

Table 1 - Agenda items

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.52pm