

FrOme
TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2021 - 22 —

Message from the Mayor

It's been a great, life changing honour to have been your Mayor. I've learnt so much about Frome and all the amazing cogs in this machine, all the people and communities that keep us together and moving forward.

There have been elements of leadership that come with this role and there's no handbook for that. This requires an honest dialogue with yourself, to accept criticism and be willing to meditate on it, learn and do better the next time around.

It also means you have to balance holding yourself to a standard and also being kind enough to yourself to remember that it's a learning experience and something we all must grow into and that you won't get it right or please everyone all of the time. Thankfully, this year has seen overwhelming positivity and support, but I'm thankful for the balance and pause for thought any of that will have brought.

I'd like to send all my love and appreciation to every group, club, organisation and individual who have invited me to come and spend time with them, to learn about the work they do or the projects they run. Too numerous to name for fear of missing people out. It's been a privilege and a deep education to experience your roles and responsibilities within the community.

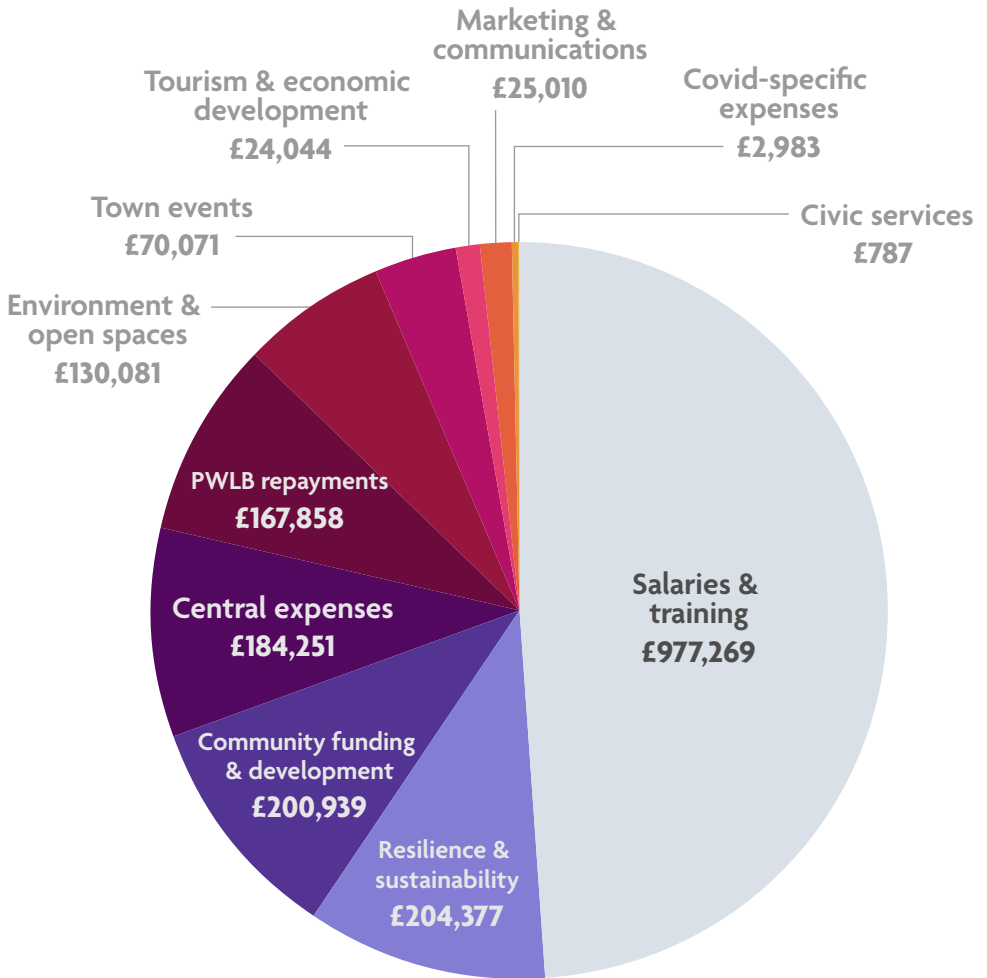
Thank you, Frome, it's been a profound journey.



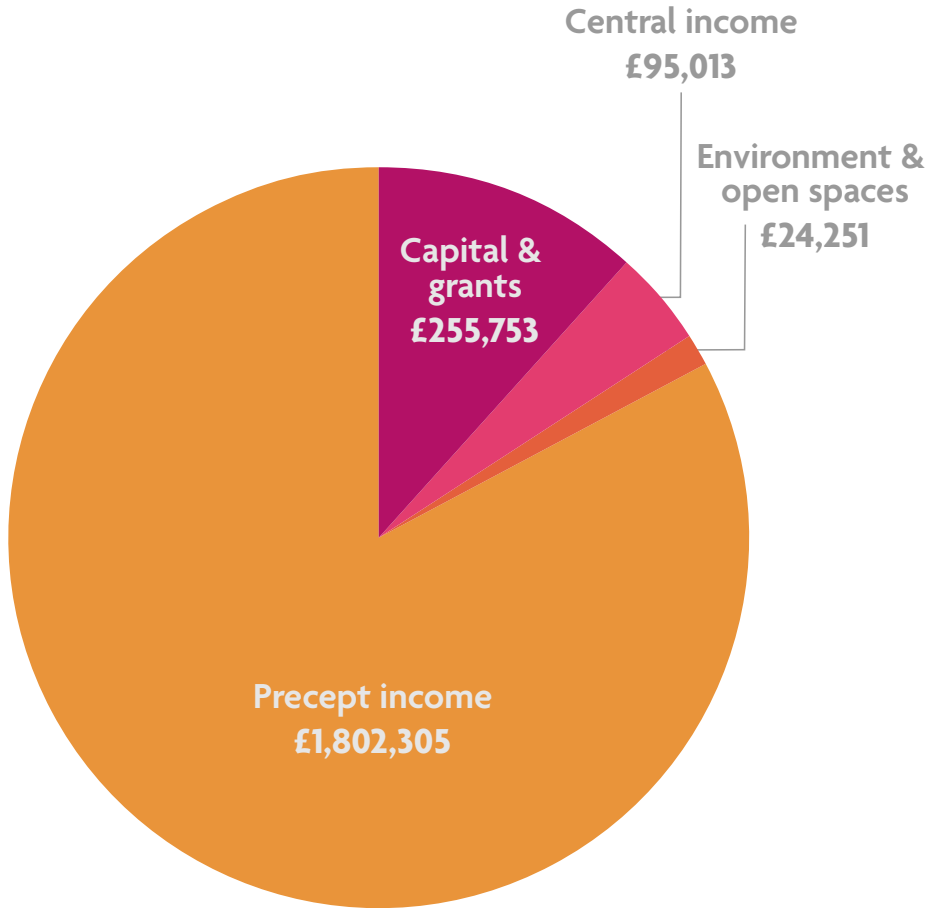
Andy Wrintmore, Mayor of Frome 2021-22
Photo by Chris Bailey

Andy Wrintmore, Mayor of Frome 2021-22

Expenditure 2021-22



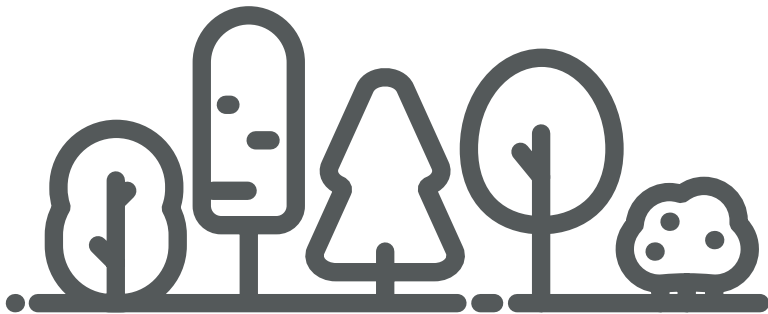
Income 2021-22



Some of our highlights in numbers

Environment

- 65 acres of well-managed space
- Plus 9 new Selwood Forest Oaks + 2 Windsor Oaks
- 76 large trees planted in the Old Showfield and around town
- 300 trees + hedgerows planted along cycle paths with Frome's Missing Links
- New Ranger-made benches across our open spaces including Egford Park, North Parade and Rodden Meadow
- 1 outdoor table-tennis table at Welshmill play area
- Bag dispensers for dog owners and dog walkers in some of our spaces
- 14 hedgehog homes in our green spaces & lots of new bird and bat boxes
- 1 new wildlife pond at the Roundhouse with Froglife and FROGS



1 TINY FOREST

at Egford Park with Earthwatch

Green and Healthy Future

Frome Town Council run two strands in the Green and Healthy programme:

Cycle together

- In 12 months 59 people have taken part and over 2,000 miles cycled
- 95% will cycle more in future
- 67% said they would cycle instead of using the car in future



Healthy Homes

- Over 583 Frome cases logged with the Centre of Sustainable Energy
- 89 cases led to referrals for grant-funded retrofit work including:
- 19x Cavity Wall Insulation
1x double glazing
2x External Wall Insulation
6x Internal Wall Insulation
19x loft insulation top-ups
6x new loft insulation
19x new heating systems
11x boiler upgrades
1x solar PV
- A financial saving of £84,800, with an average saving of £514 per household

Green and Healthy Future is a partnership with Edventure and Frome Medical Practice funded by National Lottery. Working together to help people to live greener and healthier lives in our town.

Active travel

Hire ebikes

- Over 200 hire slots booked out
- 3 ebikes now available to hire

Bike Jumble

- June 2021, supporting Frome's Missing Links
- Over 80 bikes donated
- £3000 to FML

School Travel Challenge

- 7 schools took part
- Over 1300 students



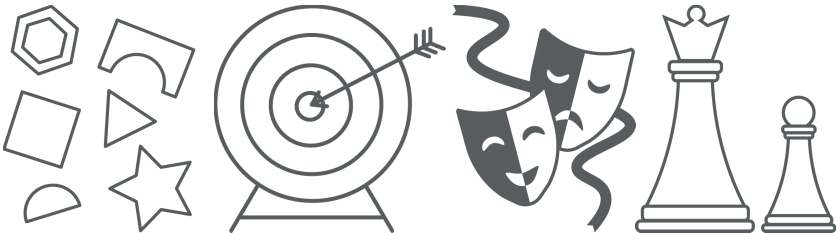
Zero Waste

- 5 new businesses signed up to Plastic Free Communities award
- Plastic Free. Period. campaign with Frome Medical Practice, encouraging use of sustainable menstrual products – free period pants distributed via Fair Frome + discounts in local shops and online
- Positive Period workshops delivered to 4 middle schools in town



Community team

- 109 street level groups signed up to the Neighbourhood Network
- Let's Talk - launched a restorative communication group
- 18 Frome residents with road closure qualifications
- Over 100 people benefitted community training
- 22 young DofE volunteers
- 9 new street level share boxes
- 300 + young people enjoyed Make it Happen youth conference, where they supported consultation about play & local park spaces and voted on People's Budget Events

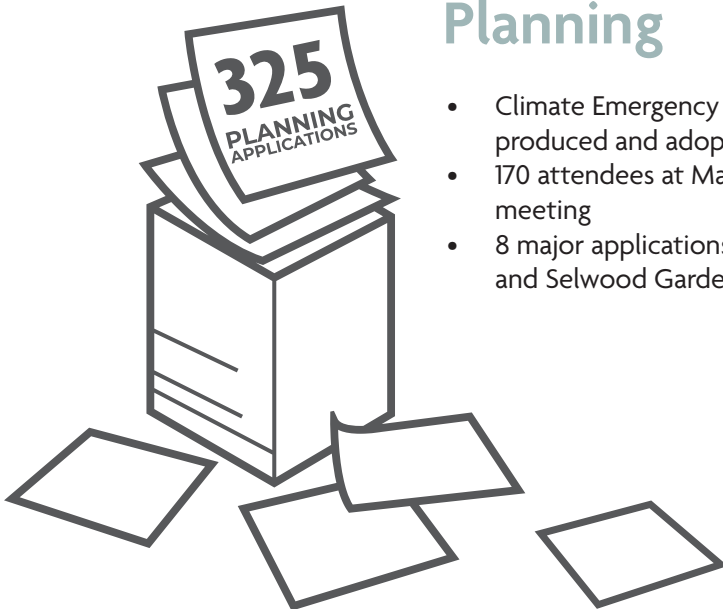


1 PLAY STRATEGY

with over 400 residents completing Choose Play survey

Wild about Frome

- Launch of the Wild Bunch, a community network that promotes wildlife-friendly approaches in our neighbourhoods
- 71 members of Wild Bunch and counting
- 60 bird boxes created (and installed) during on-street sessions in neighbourhoods
- 1000 wildlife observations in the first 6 months, on iNaturalist mapping tool



Planning

- Climate Emergency Planning Guide produced and adopted
- 170 attendees at Mayday Saxonvale meeting
- 8 major applications including Saxonvale and Selwood Garden Community

Events and Communications

- 109 events and meetings supported, including Glow in the Park, first live drone show in the southwest
- Over 40 events in our first Great Big Green Week
- 245 press releases + 23 Mayor's Columns + 78 newsletters
- 1 Frome Times take over visioning the town in 2030



find

**5000
VISITORS**

**165,000
VISITORS**



**914
POSTS**



**3094 FOLLOWERS
REACH UP 117%**

- FIND website launched with over 500 listings of local groups, projects, resources for families and visitors to Frome
- 100,000 visitors to the FTC website
- NEW Discover Frome social channels FB & Instagram

Participation & Engagement

3 Rounds of People's Budget saw residents make real choices over how a portion of our budget was spent:

- People's Budget Town: 11 street level community projects supported
- People's Budget Jubilee: 873 voted over how to spend our Jubilee budget
- People's Budget Events: 4 excellent winning events receiving a portion of the £25,000 budget

Business Enterprise

- 34 independent businesses took part in Fiver Fest
- 7 business networking events
- 4 Good Business reviews
- Over 1000 subscribers to the monthly Business Bulletin newsletter



Volunteers

- 4 Discovery Rangers
- 18 Discover Frome Information Point ambassadors
- 13 Noticeboard ambassadors
- 20 Litter warriors
- Young support: 1 summer placement, 2 work experience, 1 admin volunteer

Town Hall

- 3 tenants
- 10 new event support stewards recruited
- 453 successful meetings, forums and conferences
- 9kW of solar PV generating around 40% of electricity used at the Town Hall
- 2 new EV car chargers
- LED lighting installed in Town Hall to reduce energy use from lighting by 55%



Staff

6 STARTERS

3 LEAVERS

With the support of the community

+£40K RAISED

for refugees in Frome and our twin town Rabka-Zdroj

Frome Town Council – A Year

2021/22 marked the beginning of our first steps out of ‘pandemic life’ and multiple lockdowns, returning to a much more normal way of life.

Ahead of this Leader’s Review, I tasked the Management Team with each providing me with a synopsis of what they felt was their biggest area, or piece, of work throughout the 2021/22 Council Year. Knowing how passionate each team within Frome Town Council is about the areas of work they cover, it was really good to get a renewed feel for the sense of pride our officers take from their work; and on delivering for the people of Frome.



Andy Palmer, Leader - 2021-22

So, as part of this review, I thought we would focus on those key areas that each team within FTC have been working on for the last 12 months; and also look at some of the areas that cut across various departments here at Frome Town Council.

Planning

I think it’s safe to say that this has been one of the busier years for our Planning Manager, Jane Llewellyn; co-ordinating with the Chair of our Planning Committee, and the committee itself, in order to provide our Statutory responses to a high volume of planning applications, as well as working on some of the biggest single applications the town has seen in many years.

Included in the 8 major planning applications FTC responded to this year were the proposals for Selwood Garden Community - which included up to 1,700 homes on the 97.8 hectare site - and a Solar Park at Birchill Lane.

These applications represent the most significant development proposals that Frome has seen in a long time.

Pre-application discussions with the developers and public engagement events for this development started in 2020 and were a major area of work. The planning applications were formally submitted in August 2021. Our aim throughout the process is to ensure that stakeholders and residents are fully

informed about the proposals and have the opportunity to engage with the town council and the developers. A series of Stakeholder workshops took place in November 2021, together with public engagement events. These events were held online due to Covid restrictions at the time.

As a result of those workshops and engagement events and the feedback received, amended plans will be submitted shortly for the residential development and the Solar Park application has been withdrawn. A further round of workshops and public engagement will then take place.

Community Development

Our community team have led, developed and delivered a new play strategy for Frome which sets out ambitious aspirations to create a playful town for adults and children alike, coordinated and enabled a place based approach to the development of mental health services for children and young people and continued to work in neighbourhoods to build street networks. We have supported the development of the Neighbourhood Network, The Restorative Group and the new Wild Bunch focusing on supporting street level ecology. The Year 8 Make It Happen conference took place recently and 350 young people participated in a series of practical workshops and were enabled to have a voice and feed into a number of topics, including placing their votes for the People's Budgets: Events.

We have continued to support community organisations through one-to-one support and strategic development days for boards of trustees and have administered £70,473 in community grants, £63,000 in substantial grants and £3,690 of mayors grants over the last year to many community groups and organisations.

Resilience

Over the past 9 months the Resilience team has been working with Somerset County Council and Sustrans (a cycling and walking charity) to design a School Streets scheme around Trinity, Critchill, Oakfield and Avanti schools. The aim of the project is to make the roads safer for active travel - walking, cycling and wheeling - to create positive health and environmental outcomes. This will be the first School Streets scheme in Somerset and will provide a blueprint for other schemes across the county. An inclusive approach has been taken to designing the scheme, with Sustrans running 6 community co-design sessions

across September and October last year, supported by the team at FTC.

The feedback from these sessions has informed the draft design which is now out for public consultation. We expect the scheme to be installed for an 18-month trial period no later than Spring 2023. There have been significant challenges associated with the project which the team has worked hard to resolve, and we're pleased to now be able to present a design to the public.

Environmental Works - The Rangers

This year the Ranger team have been supporting the climate change and ecological emergency initiative by facilitating the wild about trees project whereby FTC have planted hundreds of trees and hedging plants around our green spaces. These include Packsaddle, Chapmans Close, Egford Park, New Road, Weylands and the Old Showfield.

They have also continued to change our work strategy to promote wildlife habitat creation and protection, this includes leaving more of our lawn areas to grow into wild meadow, being sensitive in completing tree works by leaving wood stacks for habitat and they have even completed hedge laying at the Muriel Jones/Birchill allotment site, which greatly improves the biodiversity of the hedgerow.

This year the Rangers installed a pond at the Otherside area of Welshmill to increase diversity in our open spaces and we are looking to expand on this by installing one in Rodden Meadow too.

In our beds and planters, they have planted pollinating perennials to create a rich environment that supports the wildlife of Frome.

Economic Development & Regeneration

Local businesses have been through a difficult time with various external events disrupting trade. However, Peter Wheelhouse and Vivienne Whitaker with support from our Marketing & Communications Team have worked hard to support the business community and those seeking employment and training as part of the local recovery effort. They have ensured that businesses have had the latest information on Government grants and how they can apply, signposted to sources of advice and have worked with the Frome Chamber of Commerce to lay on events at which business owners can obtain the support they need from either specialist advisers or fellow business operators.

Many lost their jobs through the pandemic and our economic recovery work has extended to supporting those that need to get back into training or work. Back in September, the Council worked with Jobcentre Plus and local training providers to coordinate the Spring Forward event to showcase training opportunities in and around Frome at the Frome Carnival Fun Day and the work continues through the Vocational Training Group led by the Council.

Underpinning all of the aforementioned areas is how we communicate what we are doing, and plan to do. Frome Town Council would be unable to achieve any of the things we do, without a professional, agile and dedicated Marketing & Communications team.

Marketing & Communications

The Marketing and Communications team, as well as spreading the word around all things Frome and the Town Hall, have as ever been super busy this year delivering and promoting over 85 events. There have been workshops, conferences and information evenings.

And then there have been the larger events - the picnics highlighting our green spaces, the We Feed Frome event, the ever-popular Frome Buses, and very importantly, a presence at other people's events. There has also been the lantern parade signalling the Christmas light switch on and that's before we even think about everything at the Town Hall.

However, the jewel in the crown of this year was the production of the first live audience drone show in the country - an extraordinary effort by the team for a truly impactful and accessible event. As ever it was designed to deliver across our strategic objectives: supporting the community to come together, showcase our amazing public open spaces, working with partners to produce exceptional work and highlighting Frome in a way that the whole of Frome can be proud of.

The Business Team

Apart from maintaining strong financial controls and stability throughout another unpredictable year, the business team have supported flexibility and co-operation between budget holders.

They have also enabled FTC and the Town Hall to offer high quality hybrid meetings so that Councillors, staff and residents alike can attend more meetings either in person or remotely, at a variety of times throughout the day

and evenings, from a variety of locations. FTC's goals of access, openness and opportunity have underpinned this work.

Local Government Reorganisation

After what seemed like an age, the Government decided to merge Somerset's county and district councils to create a new Somerset Unitary Council. For us in Frome that means Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council will become Somerset Unitary Council, with Council elections on 5 May 2022.

We have positioned ourselves well in the unitary debate and the Business Plan that the Unitary project team are following used virtually all of our recommendations about what the relationship between us in the town and parish council sector should be like. We were asked to pull together one of four pilot Local Community Networks (LCN) to explore this relationship. The Frame Area LCN covers Frome and the surrounding parishes and we are working together to address issues around children and families.

I see LCNs as being a crucial element of a successful unitary council - it's all to play for. The other area that we have been working on is getting our house in order to decide whether to expand the role of FTC by taking on assets and services from the unitary council. We've had some very useful help from two senior ex-district council employees on which to base a discussion following the elections at the town level.

In Closing

So, there has been much going on over the last 12 months. Considering that the things covered here are the main highlights, there is so much more that I could have gone into and explored.

What makes the areas we have covered so much more impressive is that it shows just how much higher Frome Town Council punches above its weight. It's a much repeated point, but as a Parish Council, Frome Town Council's statutory responsibilities are actually only to provide certain things such as bins, bus shelters, allotments and others, as well as holding an Annual Town Meeting.

But, as you can see, Frome Town Council provides, enables and encourages so much more than that. Due to the combination of a little-known clause of the Localism Act, known as the general 'Power of Competence'; whereby a Parish Council is able to do anything an individual can, as long as it is legal, and a highly professional officer and dedicated Councillor Team, we have been able

to deliver so much more for the people of Frome.

So, thank you to all of our Officers and Councillors, as well as the many groups and individuals we have worked with throughout the course of the last year.

As we move into a new Council year - 2022/23, and the prospect of a new Council Administration and Local Government Reorganisation, we must remember the difficulties that people will face ahead. A cost-of-living crisis is before us, and the work of our Community Team, our Resilience Team, our Economic Team and our Marketing and Comms Team will be even more important; helping those who are in need, signposting people to services and help that they require, assisting local businesses to stay in business, and making sure we get the messages out there that the people of Frome need to see.

So the hard work begins again!

Andy Palmer,
Leader of the council 2021-22

Grant Recipients 2021-2022



Make the Sunshine
Evolve Music
Frome's Missing Links
Edventure
PACE
Shared Earth Learning
Rare Species
Fair Housing for Frome
Science Boost
Friends of the Mount, Marston &
Keyford
FACLT
St Mary's Church
Nova
Jackdaws
Trio Paradis
Frome Tennis Club
Cultivating Community (Walled Garden
Nursery)
Frome Birth Talk
Frome Festival
Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley
Loop:Frome (Frome Compost CIC)
Frome Town Band
Frome Station Friends
We Hear You
Photo Frome
Jellyfish Theatre
Young People Frome
The Write Place
Frome Field to Fork
The Good Heart Frome
Frome Swimming Club

Active & In Touch
Openstorytellers
Focus Counselling
Purple Elephant
The Pod
Friends of the River Frome
Frog Life Trust
Memorial Theatre
Save Our Open Spaces
Horton Street Neighbourhood Group
Frome Gateway Club
South Oakfield Road Virus Assistance
Group
Victoria Road Neighbourhood Group
Trinity Street North Neighbourhood Group
Alexandra Road Neighbourhood Group
Packsaddle Community Group
Frome Open Art Trail
Phoenix House and Court
Macular Society
Rook Lane Arts Trust
Wells Food Network
Caravan Arts
Friends of Critchill School
Friends of Easthill
FROGS
Frome College
Frome Neighbourhood Network
Innox Hill Community Association
Keyford Neighbourhood Group
Lewis Crescent
Trinity Community Group
Whatcombe Terrace Neighbours

Grand total awarded to charities
and local groups : £164,773