

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 18 January 2023, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Philip Campagna, Anita Collier, Carla Collenette, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Ben Still, Mel Usher, Max Wide, Andy Wrintmore

In attendance:

Inspector Matthew Reed, Martin Dimery (Somerset Cllr), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Kate Hellard (Community Development Manager), Nikki Brain (Resilience Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

3 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall
2 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: <https://bit.ly/3OOFdhO>

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2023/01/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>Max Wide and Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.05pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Sara Butler proposed to accept apologies from Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather and Steve Tanner.</p> <p>Seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 7 December 2022 Fiona Barrows clarified she was not a presenter for agenda item 4 on Frome School Streets design. Andy Jones asked the apologies were made clearer that Anne Hills attended on Zoom by adding in the word 'from'.</p> <p>The amendments were proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 7 December 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting</p>	

	<p>and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2023/02/FC</p>	<p>2. A presentation from Neighbourhood Police Inspector Matthew Reed Ben Still and Tracey Ashford arrived at 7.14pm.</p> <p>Matthew gave the organisational context and the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner which include preventing and fighting crime, engaging and supporting communities and victims, the organisational context such as increasing numbers of police officers, leading a cultural change and creating capacity. Matthew also outlined how the Mendip policing area was made up with response policing, the Mendip neighbourhood policing team and specialist support.</p> <p>Matthew spoke about the recent national coverage of police behaviour and acknowledged how it had undermined confidence in the police force. He said that no one was more upset about this than the vast majority of officers who found this behaviour abhorrent. In response to these challenges the Chief Constable set out a six-point plan for improvement which included achieving an uplift in officer numbers and leading a cultural change.</p> <p>Matthew explained there were six pillars of neighbourhood policing: problem solving, investigation, response, engagement, safeguarding and managing offenders. Their priority areas were problem solving and engagement. However, Matthew noted their main challenge was a significant amount of time responding to 999 calls which resulted in other areas being squeezed.</p> <p>Matthew noted that reported crime was on a downward trajectory and was roughly comparable to other similar sized towns.</p> <p>The plans for 2023 were to focus on problem solving, specifically anti-social behaviour (ASB) and linked shop theft, ASB in parks and the drug market. There would also be a focus on public engagement by holding events in high footfall locations like markets, town centre and schools. Finally, addressing staff sickness and prosecution file quality.</p> <p>Nick Dove thanked Matthew for being proactive in his role. He said FTC had data on high footfall areas they would be happy to</p>	

	<p>share. He also noted the importance of keeping victims informed of actions being taken by the police.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows told Matthew she appreciated his earlier acknowledgement of the national coverage of police behaviour. She felt the erosion of trust particularly for women in police officers could not be underestimated. She felt training was great, but more needed to be done. Matthew responded that the small number of cases of police behaviour was not representative of the vast majority. He highlighted there were issues in Avon and Somerset which they were open about. Matthew said he would not shy away from it. He could only reassure that the majority of officers were not like that.</p> <p>Mel Usher highlighted the issue with modified cars made to backfire and the breaking of speed limits such as the 20mph limit through town centre. Matthew explained there were various methods for dealing with ASB, it was important to report online with the registration numbers. The owners could be issued with a warning and have the vehicle seized if needs be. He didn't believe 20mph areas were as effective as they were intended. The police did not have the ability to enforce all speed limits. A study had shown that there was only a 1% increase in safety. He said they were good around schools but not as effective when used widely.</p> <p>Anita Collier asked due to the cost of living had there been an increase in theft and have there been any prevention measures? Matthew said they had plans in place, with police visibility, providing advice for shops. He also noted there was a responsibility on businesses such as providing CCTV footage.</p>	
<p>2023/03/FC</p>	<p>3. <u>Question from public and Cllrs, including Mendip District Cllrs and Somerset County Cllrs</u></p> <p>Nick Dove noted that MDC ran a consultation with residents on new bike rack locations. Five new locations were proposed with one deemed as unsuitable. The rack design was not in keeping with other street furniture. When FTC challenged the design to which MDC said we wouldn't get anything else. Nick suggested that having the budget for FTC to buy the right bike racks to be put in the right place would more appropriate. In general, Nick expressed his frustration about poor communication from SCC and MDC. He explained he had been trying to get answers about s106 funding and received no acknowledgement or reply for 7/8 months. Paul Wynne said he would follow both issues up with MDC.</p>	<p>PWy</p>

	<p>Martin Dimery explained in the new Somerset Council there was going to be a Mendip area planning board. There would be 13 Cllrs on each board. The Green Party had been allocated two places. Martin explained the boards would be able to consider planning matters as before, but large scale plans would be referred to Taunton and a regulation committee.</p> <p>Representation would be from all across Somerset, with Frome in the minority.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington passed on Gill Fone’s thanks to the Rangers for their work at Foundry Barton.</p> <p>Philip Campagna noted that a cut out and keep timetable for the D2 bus service was in the next issue of the Frome Times. There would be a late night service from Frome that will go through Rode. There was a brief discussion about encouraging people to come into Frome in the evening.</p> <p>Mel Usher also referenced Nick Dove’s point about difficulties contacting MDC and SCC. He asked if Cllrs made this complaint in the future that we write as the ‘Council’ to each authority with the details and give a date for an expected response.</p>	<p>PWy</p>
<p>2023/04/FC</p>	<p>4. For decision – Introducing a Cllr allowance. A summary of report was given by Andy Jones and Fiona Barrows.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington clarified that co-opted Cllrs could not claim the allowance. Fiona explained this was correct, but Council could agree to a separate allowance. Mark also asked could the allowances of those Cllrs who didn’t claim the allowance be split between those that do. Fiona said this option had been explored but it was not possible.</p> <p>Caroline Baker asked what if more Cllrs took the allowance than was currently budgeted for? Paul Wynne explained Council could agree to increase the budget for allowances if the budget was in danger of being exceeded.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce an optional Cllr allowance of £1,500 per Cllr. 2. Delegate responsibility to the Business Manager to set up and administer the allowance for all Cllrs who choose to claim the allowance. <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>SW</p>

<p>2023/05/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision – Enabling a community owned football club.</p> <p>Mel Usher provided a summary of the report.</p> <p>Vince Parker had been appointed as Chair of the Community Benefit Society (CBS) but unfortunately he could not take the position as he had recently suffered a stroke. Mel asked that a get well soon card be sent from FTC.</p> <p>Mel explained the CBS application was about to be submitted to the Financial Conduct Authority. The recommendation was to pay for a consultant to support the interim CBS Chair. They would also take over some of the administration and give expert advice. They were edging closer to taking up the option to buy the ground for £1. Some additional due diligence was needed and to prepare a water tight temporary lease and then a longer lease to the CBS.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the recruitment of a consultant to support the set-up of the Frome Town Community Benefit Society and to incur up to £16k for this purpose utilising the New Projects budget. 2. Approve expenditure up to £20k for further legal expenses and risk assessments to be financed from the Saxonvale Legacy EMR <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWy</p>
<p>2023/06/FC</p>	<p>6. For Decision – Substantial Grant Fund</p> <p>Kate Hellard gave a summary of the report.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows noted there was nothing in the terms and conditions about inclusivity and accessibility. Kate said this could be amended to show this had been considered by the applicant.</p> <p>Carla Collenette asked if there would be one funding round? Kate explained there wouldn't be a closing date, it would be an ongoing process until the funding ran out, meaning FTC could be responsive and meet needs as they arose. Carla was concerned if organisations applied late in the year there might not be funding available for a larger project. Kate said the process could be trialled until the end of this financial year (22/23), then the Grants Advisory Panel make the decision in consultation with Town Clerk</p>	<p>KH</p>

	<p>Andy Jones proposed an addition to the first recommendation (highlighted in bold below) and an additional third recommendation.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the Substantial Grant process as outlined above for the period 2022/23 2. Agree the revised application form and terms and conditions 3. Review towards the end of 2022/23 and propose any changes to council <p>Seconded by Anne Hills, agreed by majority. Tracey Ashford abstained.</p> <p>The amended recommendations were proposed by Carla Collenette, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed by majority. Tracey Ashford abstained.</p>	
<p>2023/07/FC</p>	<p>7. For decision - Work programme, budget and precept demand for 2023/24</p> <p>Anita Collier provided a summary of the process of putting together the work programme. They thought about values, being fair, inclusive and engaging. Anita noted at the start of the Cllrs five year term there was no way of knowing the future. Therefore, flexibility and unpredictability were built into the programme. The increase in the precept was 4.9% that was below inflation. To achieve this some things in the work programme needed to be cut back for 2023/24 but still allowed ambition and to respond to upcoming challenges.</p> <p>Paul Wynne noted the process started with Council Plan which had specific actions that formed the basis of the work programme. There would be phased actions over 14 months. It would be flexible and could be reviewed by Council. In response to a question from Nick Dove, Max Wide noted that much work had gone into the preparation of the work programme and budget and that Council would need to carefully consider any changes.</p> <p>Within the staff body there was a proposal for a new admin support for the finance and open spaces teams. An increase in time allocation in the communities team, reflecting the need to focus on unitary and poverty work. Finally, a new post, to help assist in the area of unitary. Paul was confident the work programme could be delivered if these changes were approved.</p> <p>A summary of the proposed budget, income and precept was given by Sarah Williams. She noted that the proposed Band D</p>	

	<p>equivalent would be £218.92 per year, an increase of 4.85% which was under £1 a month.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the work programme for 2023/24 at Appendix 7.1 2. Approve the proposed staff structure for 2023/24 at Appendix 7.2 3. Approve the budget for 2023/24 at Appendix 7.3 4. Approve the forecast General Reserve of £244k at 1 April 2023 5. Approve the forecast Earmarked Reserves at 1 April 2023 at Appendix 7.4 6. Approve the precept demand of £1,983,504 for 2023/24 <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2023/08/FC</p>	<p>8. For decision - Approval of Risk Register 2022/23 Sarah Williams provided a summary of the report on behalf of Hannah Paniccia.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows queried how sustainable and ethical Zurich were? Max Wide confirmed that they were a well-regarded insurer amongst local authorities. Kate Hellard also confirmed they had a good reputation amongst community groups.</p> <p>The recommendation was to instruct the Chair to sign the 2022/23 Risk Register on behalf of the Council and approve the 2022/23 Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Ben Still, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The chair signed Risk Register.</p>	
<p>2023/09/FC</p>	<p>9. For decision - To apply to MDC to draw down S106 budget to design a new river bridge linking Edmund Park to the town Sarah Williams provided a summary of the report.</p> <p>Cllrs raised their original concerns around the design of the bridge and the possibility it would not be fully accessible. Cllrs said they would be supportive but would be strong in their desire for a fully accessible bridge. Paul Wynne said he would emphasise the need for the bridge to be accessible was a high priority.</p>	<p>PWy/SW</p>

	<p>Rich Ackroyd, Friends of the River Frome, explained the designs presented at the Council meeting in August 2022 were indicative designs at this stage. The s106 funding would allow them to bring a project manager on board to bring them to the next stage. They were also exploring sponsorship from developers like Persimmon and Acorn for additional works.</p> <p>Mel Usher asked if FTC were aware of all outstanding s106 agreements. Sarah confirmed they had put pressure on MDC for a table listing all s106 monies, she had gone back to ask for further information. Current MDC Cllrs were assisting in this task. Mel asked that the need for full information about outstanding s106's and asked to Town Clerk to urge MDC to provide this.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm support for this project 2. Delegate to the Business Manager and Environment Manager to apply to MDC to draw down sufficient funds from the Edmund Park s106 budget to progress and pay for the Adderwell/Edmund Park bridge design, to cover costs incurred for initial design work and to continue to work closely with Friends of the River Frome to achieve this. <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Max Wide, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWY</p> <p>SW/RH</p>
<p>2023/10/FC</p>	<p>10. For decision - Calendar of meetings 2023/24 The dates were agreed, and Cllrs would explore alternative times for meetings. If new times were proposed this would come back to a future council meeting for approval.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the calendar of meetings for 2023/24.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2022/11/FC</p>	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 22 February 2023, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

Table 1 - Agenda items

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.54pm