

# Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 22 February 2023, 7pm  
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

**Present:**

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Philip Campagna, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather, Ben Still, Steve Tanner, Mel Usher, Andy Wrintmore

On Zoom: Max Wide

**In attendance:**

Martin Dimery (Somerset Cllr), Adam Boyden (Somerset Cllr), Dawn Denton (Somerset Cllr), Sarah Dyke (South Somerset Cllr and MP candidate), Sean Dromgoole (Leader of Lanport Town Council), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

15 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall  
4 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: <https://bit.ly/3m9wc7O>

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2023/12/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>The chair noted that more work was needed on Agenda item 4 and proposed that it was removed from the agenda. There was a clear consensus in agreement, and it was removed from discussion.</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Anita Collier proposed to accept apologies from Carla Collette and Andy Jones.</p> <p>Seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 18 January 2023 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 18 January 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p>	

	Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed by majority.	
2023/13/FC	<p>2. For decision - Vote of no-confidence in our MP for Somerton and Frome, David Warburton</p> <p>Fiona Barrows presented her report and Paul Wynne read out a statement from David Warburton in response to the vote of no confidence from FTC.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the role of an MP and the consensus was that one of their main roles should be to represent their constituents.</p> <p>Mel Usher felt FTC had already been partially successful, within 24 hours of the agenda coming out FTC had received a statement from David, a proxy vote for David had been agreed and there had been local and regional media showing attention.</p> <p>There was a discussion about lack of replies when contacting David’s office, Frome being well represented at town, district and county level but not nationally and that David should have been more involved in the unitary process.</p> <p>Various members of the public and other Cllrs from Langport Town Council, MDC and SCC spoke in support of the vote of no confidence.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Frome Town Council considers that the lack of proper MP representation has existed for far too long, it has no confidence in our MP David Warburton and accordingly it requests that he resigns to allow a By Election to take place.</li> <li>2. That this report be forwarded to all other parishes in the constituency for their information</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Fiona Barrows, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWy
2023/14/FC	<p>3. Question from public and Cllrs and Cllrs, including Mendip District Cllrs and Somerset County Cllrs</p> <p>Anita Collier noted there had been a delay in moving forward with Cllr allowances as agreed at the January Council meeting. Sara Butler read out the following statement:</p> <p>“We have been contacted by the Monitoring Officer at Mendip and can confirm that Cllr allowances are currently on hold until a new remuneration panel has been set up by the new Somerset</p>	

	<p>authority. We want to introduce the allowances as we want to see a diverse range of people representing the town, and a small expense allowance is one way to do that. It means self employed people can take a few hours off to do council business without losing out quite so much. It means parents of young children can afford childcare to attend evening meetings. Currently all town councillors fulfil their roles voluntarily, often on top of full-time work, because they care about the town and its future. This very small token amount would mean that the opportunity to work for the benefit of the town is not only open to wealthy, older or retired people, and we hope to be able to introduce this once having regard to the advice of the Somerset Council Remuneration Panel once it is established.”</p> <p>Gill Fone wanted to make FTC aware that the Graham Gibson, from Somerset Highways was looking into a significant crack in a high wall at Foundary Barton. She also noted there was an area of land looked scruffy and neglected and it needed the landowner to look into it. Mark Dorrington noted that Rob Holden and himself were meeting Gill in the coming days.</p> <p>Gill also noted that the new traffic lights outside of Iceland in the town centre were no longer safe to use for visually impaired people as there was no longer an audio signal that it was safe to cross. Paul Wynne said this would be reported to Highways.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked to find out what happens to cleaning in the town centre when one of the street cleaners was off sick. Rob Holden said there had been an issue on getting clarity and it has taken a long time to receive a reply from the contractor, ID Verde. He was told that a barrowman would be replaced if one was off work. He also noted that the ID Verde contract was up for renewal in November, which represented an opportunity to relook at town centre cleanliness management.</p> <p>Mel Usher commented that it issues such as this were only going to get worse when responsibility moved to Taunton. Things like street cleanliness were not going to be high on their list. He felt FTC needed to devise a system to monitor issues such as this.</p> <p>Martin Dimery noted it had been confirmed that planning decisions will be made at Somerset East planning board for larger developments and planning applications will continue to consult neighbours.</p> <p>Dawn Denton was working with David Warburton’s office to restart the conversation about moving Berkley School to the</p>	<p>RH</p> <p>PWh</p>
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	<p>Edmund Park estate. There were currently three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The lease at the current site is renewed in 2025/26 then the school could stay on the land but would need money to build a new school.</li> <li>2. Move to Edmund Park but money needed to build school and community centre</li> <li>3. The last resort would be to move the 97 children to other schools in Frome who do have spaces.</li> </ol> <p>Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.30pm and Max Wide joined the meeting online.</p>	
2023/15/FC	<p>4. For decision – proposal to change the structure of The Frome Independent This item was removed from the agenda.</p>	
2023/16/FC	<p>5. For approval - Financial update to 31 January 2023 Sarah Williams provided a summary of the report.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows asked why FTC was still using Barclays for FTC's current account. Sarah explained that she was still working with both Triodos and Unity Bank to be able to process bulk payments. Until this was possible FTC could not move away from Barclays.</p> <p>Max Wide asked if the format of the report could be amended in the future to understand easier what was off track. Sarah said she would amend the next finance report to focus on variances.</p> <p>Fiona also felt there was an assumed level of knowledge when reading the reports and asked if there was training for Cllrs to help. Sarah said she could do a variance on the report next time and the Monday night ahead of the council hold a meeting on Zoom for Cllrs for clarification.</p> <p>The recommendations were to approve the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal Auditors report letter September 2022 to December 2022</li> <li>2. Income and expenditure report to 31 January 2023</li> <li>3. Payments made over £500 for November 2022 to 31 January 2023</li> <li>4. Balance sheet report including the breakdown of reserves at 31 January 2023</li> <li>5. Two Sum Up accounts for Frome Town Council under Sarah Williams and Rachel Griffin's names for the card payment processing facilities at the Town Hall and Discover Frome Information Point.</li> </ol>	<p>SW</p> <p>SW</p>

	<p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed by majority. Tracey Ashford abstained.</p>	
<p>2023/17/FC</p>	<p>6. For decision - Whether to support the use of s106 for play equipment at two MDC open spaces - Blackbird Way and Hawksworth Close Tracey Ashford introduced the report.</p> <p>It was noted that MDC said the play equipment could be moved once in situ and more pieces added.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather asked if an equalities impact assessment had been carried out? Rob Holden said that as far as he was aware MDC had not carried out one. Rob noted that MDC's proposal did follow FTC's Play Strategy. Lisa said it felt as though FTC had been backed into a corner and she was disappointed there was no facility for disabled children. This was echoed by other Cllrs.</p> <p>There was a general discussion about the disappointment in the lack of consultation and process employed by MDC. Tracey noted she had received an email from a resident of the area who had urged Cllrs to agree to the proposal for Hawksworth Close as there were no other play parks as close for younger children.</p> <p>There was also a discussion about the process of using s106 money and how future decisions should be made at a more local level. Rob explained that at a recent meeting with MDC Cllr Heather Shearer agreed that greater clarity was needed on s106 monies, and she would be following up on the process.</p> <p>Polly Lamb noted we were living in age of inclusivity, and it shouldn't be for a smaller council to demonstrate to a larger council.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington proposed a compromise of supporting MDC's proposal for Hawksworth Way but not Blackbird Way. This was not taken forward.</p> <p>MDC Cllrs Adam Boyden acknowledged mistakes had been made and would ensure it didn't happen again at the new council. He would aim for a more engaging process.</p> <p>The recommendation was to decide whether to support the use of s106 budgets for play equipment at Blackbird Way and Hawksworth Close.</p> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove to support, seconded by Philip</p>	

	<p>Campagna, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2023/18/FC</p>	<p>7. For minuting - Application to use S.106 funds for Old Showfield Play Area Refresh  Rob Holden provided a summary of the report.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather asked if anything had been planned for people in the Garston site who had lost out on a play park and the benefit of the s106 money? Paul Wynne explained that the money could not be spent in the area. The play park could not be installed because of an attenuation tank that had been sunk into the ground and it couldn't support play equipment, so the s106 money was allocated elsewhere. Lisa asked to record her disappointment in the decision to install the tank and for the residents of the area who had lost out.</p> <p>Anita Collier asked if the plan was to use all the money? If what FTC wanted to do goes over budget, where would the rest come from? And could any remainder be used on other green spaces? Rob explained that the proposed drainage works at the Old Showfield were likely to be in the high tens of thousands, and £100k had been estimated just for the play equipment. Therefore it was very likely use up a lot of the budget. The s106 funding had to be spent by December 2025 and was ring fenced for Rodden Meadow, the Showfield, New Road and Mary Baily so any surplus could be used for those spaces. He would do his best not to go over budget but until quotes had been received this could not be a certainty.</p> <p>Adam Boyden said he supported an investment in the Showfield, and it was important for pupils of nearby schools. He asked about the future of the skatepark at Mary Baily? Rob explained the skatepark was very tired and there was an initiative by local people to raise funds and actively explore the options. He noted it was quite an involved topic particularly about the best location.</p> <p>Regarding the plans for the play area at the Old Showfield, Fiona Barrows urged FTC to do something creative, inclusive and different.</p> <p>The recommendation was to note this work at the Old Showfield is needed and request MDC release £178k from the Garston Road 071064/007 s106 agreement to pay for it.</p> <p>Proposed Anita Collier, seconded by Tracey Ashford, agreed unanimously.</p>	

2023/19/FC	<p>8. For decision – to approve an update to Chapter 22 Volunteer Policy A summary was provided by Paul Wynne.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve Chapter 22 Volunteer Policy.</p> <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2022/20/FC	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 15 March 2023, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

*Table 1 - Agenda items*

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.28pm