

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 15 November 2023, 7pm  
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

**Present:**

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Anita Collier, Fiona Barrows, Philip Campagna (Chair), Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather, Ben Still, Steve Tanner, Mel Usher, Max Wide

**In attendance:**

Mike Bishop (Town Crier), Angie Bishop, Adam Boyden (SC Cllr), Dawn Denton (SC Cllr), Helen Kay (SC Cllr), Shane Collins (SC Cllr), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

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

1 member of the public was in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4rhzdht2w&t=14s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4rhzdht2w&t=14s)

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2023/82/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm.</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Fiona Barrows proposed to accept apologies from Andy Jones and Carla Collenette, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 4 October 2023 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 4 October 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2023/83/FC	<p>2. Presentation of the Mayor's Civic Award to Mike Bishop, Town Crier In marking Mike's retirement as Frome Town Crier in November 2023, Mayor of Frome Philip Campagna presented him with a Civic Award. Philip thanked Mike and his wife Angie</p>	

	<p>for all they had done for Frome over the seventeen years. Philip presented the award to Mike and a bouquet of flowers to Angie.</p> <p>Mike thanked Philip for the award, he said it meant a lot to him. He said he didn't realise how much he would enjoy the role. He and Angie looked forward to enjoying their retirement and making use of their National Trust membership finally.</p> <p>Philip encouraged everyone to view the small exhibition showing photos and memorabilia of Mike's time as Town Crier in the Town Hall.</p>	
<p>2023/84/FC</p>	<p>3. Question from public and Cllrs, including Somerset Cllrs Julian Quail was pleased that street lamps had been fixed in Cheap Street and Vicarage Street. However noted that King Street had five street lamps out. Paul Wynne said this would be passed on to Somerset Highways. Anne Hills also noted a street lamp out on Church Steps. She noted 'Fix my Street' was a good way of reporting issues such as street light issues. Julian asked how to take part in the next Frome Hoedown and the litter warriors. Shane Collins noted there was a Facebook page for the Frome Hoedown and they would be meeting on the last Sunday of each month.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows noted to Dawn Denton that she appreciated her monthly updates. However she was worried that the tone of the recent update came across as political point scoring and was not helpful as the financial issues were faced by other councils than just Somerset.</p> <p>Steve Tanner asked for an update on the finger post signage. Jane Llewellyn noted they were due to be installed on 27<sup>th</sup> November and would be finished by 29<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Helen Kay noted that Somerset were currently assessing bids for 505 houses (in addition to those in the Local Plans Part 1 and 2) in terms of sustainability. Officers would assess their suitability for location. She thought the Frome Area LCN would be a good forum to discussion the allocations. Steve Tanner noted it would be useful for SC to engage with FTC for their perspective and help. Cllrs asked Paul Wynne to request this of SC.</p> <p>Adam Boyden noted the positive news that Somerset were engaged in conversations with Mayday Saxonvale.</p>	<p>RH</p> <p>PWy</p>
<p>2023/85/FC</p>	<p>4. For information - current financial situation at Somerset Council at 8 November 2023</p>	

	<p>5. For information – update on the unitary programme</p> <p>Item 5 was brought forward and merged with item 4</p> <p>Paul Wynne introduced the report and set out the current financial difficulties being experienced by SC.</p> <p>Max Wide provided a summary of the national context which was affecting SC and why they were in their current financial troubles.</p> <p>Within the national context Max noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somerset was one of 30 councils teetering on the brink</li> <li>• The S114 notice was originally intended for rogue councils but was now more common place</li> <li>• Many were suffering due to the ‘commerciality’ agenda set by government</li> <li>• Councils like Somerset had faced a 40% reduction in funding from government whilst an increase in demand on services</li> </ul> <p>Within the local context Max noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low council tax</li> <li>• Low adult social care precept</li> <li>• Business rate reliance in a low skill, low wage and low productivity economy</li> <li>• Loss of £69m on commercial property portfolio</li> <li>• Out of county children’s provision with really high costs</li> <li>• Inappropriate housing stock leading to high needs</li> </ul> <p>Max talked about some of the potential opportunities that could be deduced from the recent letter from Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of SC, about devolution. One of these was to deliver early help in Frome building on previous and current work. The Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 gives a local authority the power to force a rental auction on properties vacant for more than a year. FTC could potentially work with SC to either prevent this from happening or work with SC on the auction.</p> <p>Anne Hills noted how selling assets would be a short term solution as it would be for a family with a negative budget. Max said it felt like SC were in a panic mode and noted there was a danger FTC could become part of the crisis if our response was not thought through.</p> <p>Anita Collier asked for Max’s thoughts on whether government would consider lifting the cap. Max said there was no signs of this and felt government’s stance was that councils should live</p>	
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	<p>within their means. He said local government always lagged behind the NHS in terms of levels of funding.</p> <p>Mel Usher noted that very few organisations could survive 40% reduction of funding and increase in demand. FTC should show some anger by bring the community together to demonstrate this. The task facing SC was huge, with 329 parishes in the county to engage with on devolution. But he said there was some opportunities such as creative use of the library which could make it better.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows felt FTC should keep in mind that the most deprived will feel this crisis the hardest. Also she felt that it would be impossible to fill the black hole of funding. She expressed her concern that the timescale was so tight to make decisions.</p>	
<p>2023/86/2023</p>	<p><b>6. For information – Speed Indicator Device update For decision – Rodden Road discussion</b></p> <p>Jane Llewellyn provided a summary of the report. Anita Collier summarised the current situation with the issues of speed on Rodden Road after the recent serious collision.</p> <p>Tony, Fromefield resident, asked why the surrounding villages had been granted 20mph zones but Frome hadn't. He was also concerned about the use of speed calming measures. Anita explained the rules and criteria of introducing 20mph zones had changed considerably since they were installed in the villages, likely under the Cllr small improvement scheme. Somerset had assessed Fromefield speeds over 20mph so additional calming measures were required. SC and FTC were not in a position to fund these. However it would be added to the speed watch area and signage would be installed.</p> <p>Anita Collier spoke about the recent work in Rodden Road after the collision, she had attended a meeting with residents. Residents were forming the Rodden Road Speed and Safety group. 11 residents had signed up to become speed watch volunteers. Ideas for solutions were double yellow lines, 20 mph zone, pedestrian crossing from the footpath to Rodden Meadow, and planters in the road. It was acknowledged that a number of those solutions would not be viable due to funding.</p> <p>Jane explained the costs associated with some of the traffic calming options which would all cost in excess of £100k. A quick option was to install the SID along Rodden Road and install 'Kill your Speed' signs.</p>	

	<p>Anita spoke about some of the discussed options from a meeting she attended with the police and community speedwatch. If all interventions were implemented, including the improvements to walking and cycling routes across the town as recommended in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) it would cost £6 million. Anita noted how FTC had raised concern with SC about how residents had been advised that any request for highways works was the responsibility of FTC to design and fund. This was not true.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the speed requirements to enforce a 20mph and the traffic calming measures for those areas where average speeds were already above 24mph.</p> <p>Jane explained she was advised by the Police there was a website residents could upload video footage of speeding problems. The more evidence they had the easier it would be for them to build a case for intervention. The website was: <a href="https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/rnm">https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/rnm</a></p> <p>Dawn Denton was in touch with the night enforcement officer, she asked for suggestions of safe places around Frome that he could park to do some monitoring at night time.</p> <p>Cllrs thanked Anita Collier for all her hard work.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the information on the locations and SID process</li> <li>2. To write to Somerset Council Highways, expressing concern over the speed of traffic along Rodden Road.</li> <li>3. Request the installation of double yellow lines in appropriate locations along Roden Road</li> <li>4. Request a licence from Highways to site the SID along Roden Road, in the locations referred to in the report.</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>JL</p> <p>JL</p>
<p>2023/87/FC</p>	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 6 December 2023, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

The chair closed the meeting at: 9.02pm