

Minutes of a meeting of the Oversight Committee

Wednesday 25 October 2023, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Fiona Barrows, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Steve Tanner (Chair)

In attendance:

Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

1 member of the public was in attendance at Frome Town Hall

0 members of the public in attendance on Zoom

To watch the discussion in full visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAOjU3DLtWO>

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2023/07/OS	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1. Elect an interim Chair In the absence of the Chair, Anne Hills proposed Steve Tanner as interim Chair, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Steve Tanner took the chair.</p>	
2023/08/OS	<p>2a. Apologies for absence Fiona Barrows proposed to accept apologies from Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Polly Lamb, and Mel Usher seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>2b. Declaration of members' interests Fiona Barrows and Andy Jones declared an interest in item 4 as members of the Broadway Community Garden.</p> <p>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 26 July 2023 Sarah Williams updated about the Elliot building and noted she was negotiating with Fair Frome to stay. She spoke to Mel Usher about the proposed use by Fair Frome, the increased community use, and a slight increase in rent. It was agreed it did not need to come back to Council for discussion.</p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse explained that the Loop de Loop building terms of lease had been agreed by SC and FTC but not yet</p>	

	<p>signed with SC. The building had been deep cleaned, rewired, and guttering fixed. Licenses signed with Edventure and Lungi Bababs by end of November. Volunteers would be painting the building. The terms of the lease do not require FTC to hand the building back in the same condition received from Somerset. The minutes of the Oversight Committee meeting held on 26 July 2023 were not approved at the meeting and would be tabled at the next meeting on 31 January 2024.</p>	
2023/09/OS	<p>3. Questions and comments</p> <p>Tracey Ashford arrived at 7.17pm.</p> <p>A member of the public, Jane, shared her frustrating experiences with the environmental health department at Somerset Council (formerly Mendip). She explained how officers issued notices without prior discussion and despite her numerous attempts she had been unable to resolve the issues. This led to over £20k in costs. Steve Tanner asked her to leave her contact details so that FTC can forward these on to the relevant Somerset Cllrs as well as the Frome ward Cllr to take this forward and to ask the advice of FTC’s Planning and Development Manager about licensing rules.</p> <p>It was requested to explain the different roles of Frome Town and Somerset Councils. Peter Wheelhouse explained that Somerset were the principal authority and they provided statutory services such as education, social care and, in this case, enforcement. FTC did not have an enforcement role. FTC were representatives of the community and could act on behalf of members of the community to try and get some answers.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows requested that the leaflet produced by Openstorytellers explaining the responsibilities of each council was updated and Fiona asked to be part of the project.</p>	<p>PWh/JL</p> <p>PWh</p>
2023/10/OS	<p>7. For information – update on staff starters and leavers This item was brought forward to item number 4.</p> <p>New staff members Katie Fraser and Sally Richards introduced themselves.</p> <p>Katie was covering Emma Parker’s secondment and joined FTC as Resilience Officer for 12 months. She was leading community engagement on the School Streets scheme.</p> <p>Sally Richards was the Community Retrofit Lead within the Green and Healthy Frome team. Sally was able to provide free</p>	

	<p>retrofit assessments to residents in Frome at a rate of two a week. The booking for assessments had been so popular Sally was booked up until Easter 2024. Sally explained her plan to start a community hub with Edventure which would be a forum to share information and contacts. It could inform trades people how to upskill or helping residents access builders are trades people.</p> <p>Peter also introduced Mike Wright, new Town Centre Ranger and Amber Stone, Marketing and Communications Intern. Both would attend a future meeting. He noted that interviews were soon to replace the Resilience Manager.</p>	
<p>2023/11/OS</p>	<p>4. For information - Review of Nurture Open Spaces Work Programme</p> <p>Rob Holden provided a summary of the report which updated the meeting on progress to deliver the open spaces part of the current work programme.</p> <p>The discussion was on possible sites that could be taken on from SC under the devolution banner. The current list was definitive but was to facilitate discussions with SC.</p> <p>Rob asked the question, should FTC start using glyphosate free RoundUp? A new machine had been bought to remove weeds above ground. However, the weeds would come back as the roots remained. It was decided that it was a bigger discussion looking at the pros and cons and the environmental impact of introducing a glyphosate free weed killer. Rob would provide a report to a future Council meeting.</p> <p>Rob highlighted the recently finished improvements to the play area at the Showfield. It had been carefully planned with the community and was accessible to all. The opening was scheduled for Thursday 30th November.</p> <p>Other summaries included play developments in Welshmill woods, the café at Victoria Park, Victoria Park toilet refurbishment, CCTV at Victoria Park, Egford Park, Showfield car park discussions, Broadway Community Garden path installation, providing outdoor maintenance at Frome Medical Practice and the community woodland progress.</p> <p>Anne Hills asked Rob how we could encourage Somerset Highways to keep footpaths clear and open in the town. Fiona Burrows agreed to pass on some contacts she has with walking groups targeting harder to reach potential walkers. Rob explained the rights of way team had responsibility and</p>	<p>RH</p>

	<p>encouraged anyone to keep reporting to them to provide more weight to the problems. There was a brief discussion about Walkers are Welcome and the Walking Festival that was coming up soon both highlight accessible routes for walking in and around the town. Tracey Ashford highlighting the importance of having sitting points around the town on walking routes and open spaces was really important.</p> <p>Anne Hills offered to send an email to Claire Haskins, rights of way and David Carter, Somerset Highways about the issue of accessible footpaths.</p> <p>Fiona asked to see the map and list of possible open spaces that FTC might take on from SC.</p> <p>There was consensus that a discussion about open spaces should be had in council within the context of devolution with SC.</p>	<p>AH</p> <p>PWh</p>
<p>2023/12/OS</p>	<p>5. For decision – finance report to Oversight Committee to mid year, 30 September 2023 A brief summary of the report was given by Sarah Williams.</p> <p>Anne Hills suggested she and Sarah looked at the environmental, social and governance policies of the public sector deposit fund as well as their debt management.</p> <p>Fiona noted that in the budget setting for next year she felt there was an increasing need for more HR resource.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve Appendix 5.2 the Income & Expenditure report at 30 September 2023 2. Approve Appendix 5.3 the Balance Sheet at 30 September 2023 3. Approve Appendix 5.5 Payments over £500 July to September 2023 <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed by majority. Fiona Barrows abstained.</p>	<p>SW / Anne Hills</p>
<p>2023/13/OS</p>	<p>6. For decision – approval of the staff handbook Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the reviewed staff handbook for 2023/24</p>	

	Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed by majority.	
2023/14/OS	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 31 January 2024, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.17pm