

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 13 March 2024, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Philip Campagna (Chair), Carla Collenette, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Andy Jones, Lisa Merryweather, Ben Still, Steve Tanner, Mel Usher, Max Wide, Andy Wrintmore

In attendance:

Dawn Denton (SC Cllr), Martin Dimery (SC Cllr), Helen Kay (SC Cllr, online), Esme Patey Ford and Jenny Shackelford (Transition Streets Frome), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Jo Morris (Resilience Officer), Owen King (Climate Action Evaluator/Researcher), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer, online), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

1 member of the public was in attendance at Frome Town Hall
4 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ley3fCaDavs

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2024/16/FC	<p>1. Video from Transition Streets An introduction video to Transition Streets was played at the beginning of the meeting. Transition Streets was part of the Frome Neighbourhood Network and as a project aimed to support local street groups to reduce carbon footprints, save money and bring neighbours together. They thanked FTC for the grant to enable the Transition Streets project to go ahead.</p>	
2024/17/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>2a. Apologies for absence Nick Dove proposed to accept apologies from Anne Hills, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>2b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 21 February 2024 Lisa Merryweather updated that she and Jane Llewellyn were consulting residents on a proposed one-way system on Alexandra Road following a request from resident Bill Lowe at the February meeting.</p>	

	<p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 21 February 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed by majority. Fiona Barrows abstained.</p>	
<p>2024/18/FC</p>	<p>3. Questions from public and Cllrs, including Somerset Cllrs Anita Collier provided an update on the difficult decision to pull out of hosting the quadripartite in Frome in 2025 due to cost pressures in terms of cost of living, the uncertain financial crisis at SC and the cost of hosting. She confirmed the Twinning Association would continue to maintain connections through other means including an upcoming youth football tournament.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows promoted the campaign to raise £4,500 to provide reusable period kits to students in need. She encouraged anyone to donate that was able.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by Nick Dove about time spent removing unauthorised posters around the town and vinyl posters attached to the bridge. Any Wrintmore noted that 23 Bath Street’s contract with event promoters says that illegal fly posters was not permitted. Nick requested that the Frome Times raise this issue.</p> <p>Nick also thanked Dawn Denton for her regular updates to Council.</p> <p>Martin Dimery noted that Critchill Court was due to be closed. He had heard that there was an interested buyer, but this was now out of SC’s hands. He was most concerned that current residents were rehomed in Frome. He also noted that SC were exploring options of selling the land at Saxonvale. He and other Somerset Cllrs were keeping pressure on to make sure the best proposal for the site was chosen rather than the highest bidder and the decision by SC on whether to sell the land and to whom was held at a meeting in Frome.</p>	
<p>2024/19/FC</p>	<p>4. For information – Annual summary of Frome Welcomes Refugees Advisory Group Anita Collier gave a summary of the report.</p> <p>Cllrs thanked Anita and the Advisory Group for all their great work so far. Mel Usher and Ben Stills asked whether some of the remaining funds could be used to support humanitarian aid in Gaza. Anita said she would raise the idea with the group</p>	

	<p>when they next met but did emphasize that the money had been raised to support refugees who had come to Frome.</p>	
<p>2024/20/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision - Update on the unitary programme and whether to pay to keep open the toilets and retain the CCTV for one year</p> <p>Max Wide and Paul Wynne both provided a summary of the report. Max noted that he'd met with senior SC Cllrs raising frustrations about the rate of progress of devolution and since then progress was speeding up. He noted that the report from Activist (FTC's consultants) on how best to progress the concept of a package or deal of devolved assets and services was expected. It was hoped that it would be tabled at the April Council meeting. On the Vale of Frome LCN, Max noted that this was progressing well. In particular, there was a good discussion developing about the possibility of a LCN highways warden.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the transfer of responsibility for the toilets in the Market Yard car park from SC to FTC. Paul explained he expected to negotiate a 25 year lease with a two year break clause, enabling FTC to pull out if need be. He confirmed due diligence would be carried out on the state of the building as well as clear understanding of cleaning and repair costs prior to signing the lease. The priority was to keep the toilets open from 1 April and the detail would be covered in the lease (<i>since the meeting a short term tenancy at will arrangement has been agreed to keep the toilets open and clean while the 25 year lease is being negotiated</i>).</p> <p>Paul noted that since the report went out, he had received a draft service level agreement with SC for CCTV. The cost would be up to £28k for the first year which Paul was still negotiating. There was a brief discussion about the value and importance of maintaining CCTV in Frome also how important it was to the police.</p> <p>Paul suggested an amendment (in red below) to recommendation 3 which was:</p> <p>Enter into a 3 year SLA with SC to provide a-CCTV in Frome. The cost in year 1 to be up to £28k and £28k plus an inflationary element in the second and third year.</p> <p>The amendment was proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously</p>	

	<p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the progress and next steps on the delivery of the work programme in the report above. 2. Agree to pay up to a maximum of £24k to keep the toilets open and clean in the Market Yard car park for 12 months from 1 April 2024 and enter into a 25 year lease for the toilet block with a 2 year break clause. 3. Enter into a 3 year SLA with SC to provide CCTV in Frome. The cost in year 1 to be up to £28k and £28k plus an inflationary element in the second and third year. 4. Report back with update on progress to future Council meetings. <p>Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Max Wide, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWY</p> <p>PWY</p> <p>PWY</p>
<p>2024/21/FC</p>	<p>6. For information – Update on the Planning & Affordable Housing programme in the Council Plan and work programme Jane Llewellyn gave a summary of the report.</p> <p>Steve Tanner said FTC should write to SC asking for a parish boundary review because a huge number of houses that are likely to be built outside of the Frome parish boundary will have a significant impact on Frome infrastructure and services without having the benefit of contribution to the precept from those new residents. Paul Wynne offered to write on behalf of FTC asking for a review, Cllrs agreed.</p> <p>Max Wide voiced concern about the collective impact of large planning applications on the infrastructure of the town and that the LCN would be a good forum for this discussion.</p>	<p>PWY</p>
<p>2024/22/FC</p>	<p>7. For decision - The process for producing the next FTC strategy for 2024-2027 Andy Jones presented a summary of the report.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the membership of the steering group.</p> <p>Max Wide proposed an amendment (in red below) to recommendation 3 which would read:</p> <p>Create a “task and finish” Steering Group comprising of more than the Leader, the Mayor and the Town Clerk to be responsible for drafting the Council Plan and for Cllr Wide to be one of these.</p> <p>Seconded by Nick Dove.</p>	

	<p>Anita Collier, Nick Dove, Ben Still, Max Wide, Andy Wrintmore and Sara Butler voted in favour of the amendment.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows, Philip Campagna, Andy Jones, Carla Collenette voted against.</p> <p>Steve Tanner, Mel Usher, Mark Dorrington and Lisa Merryweather abstained.</p> <p>Carried by majority.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the principles, process and timetable described above (<i>in the report</i>) to produce the next Council Plan with a view to tabling it for adoption at the November Council meeting at the latest. 2. Delegate to the Community Engagement Lead to commission a short-term research project to build a robust data picture. The project will run alongside of and be informed by the qualitative engagement process (and vice versa). This project to be funded by the Vision 4 Frome EMR and the data will be published on the FTC website. 3. Create a “task and finish” Steering Group comprising of more than the Leader, the Mayor and the Town Clerk to be responsible for drafting the Council Plan and for Cllr Wide to be one of these. <p>Proposed by Andy Wrintmore, seconded by Nick Dove.</p> <p>Philip Campagna, Carla Collenette, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Andy Jones, Ben Still, Max Wide and Andy Wrintmore voted in favour.</p> <p>Steve Tanner, Lisa Merryweather, Fiona Barrows, Mel Usher and Sara Butler abstained.</p> <p>Carried by majority</p>	<p>HS</p> <p>PWy</p>
<p>2024/23/FC</p>	<p>8. For decision – To keep the Christmas Festoon Lights on Year Round</p> <p>A presentation of the report was given by Nick Dove and Rob Holden.</p> <p>Jo Morris asked Rob about the environmental impact of keeping the lights on. Rob explained that it would cost about 10p per hour to run the lights therefore the carbon output would be minimal and it might be difficult to source a green energy provider for street lights.</p>	

	<p>Rob Holden suggested an additional recommendation (in red below) which was:</p> <p>To approve the extension to the Palmer Street lights at a ballpark cost of up to £1,400.</p> <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the 4 sets of festoon lights to be switched on year round and to cover the approximate initial set-up costs of £2,741 and approximate ongoing savings of £3,956 to the Christmas light budget. 2. To approve the extension to the Palmer Street lights at a ballpark cost of up to £1,400 <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>RH</p>
<p>2024/24/FC</p>	<p>9. For decision – Update on Climate & Ecological Emergency work programme & proposal to extend contract of Energy Advice Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>A summary of the report was given by Jo Morris, Owen King and Peter Wheelhouse. Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve an extension to the contract of the Home Energy Advice Volunteer Coordinator until 31 March 2025 subject to the agreement of the Lottery’s Climate Action Fund to fund this utilising reallocated funds available to FTC 2. Delegate to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with the Business Manager to finalise the details of the contract <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Andy Wrintmore, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWh</p>
<p>2024/25/FC</p>	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 17 April 2024, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

The chair closed the meeting at: 9.10pm