

## Agenda item 9

For information – Review of the Community Engagement & Development, Marketing & Communications, Climate Action and Town Centre work programmes

### Community Engagement & Development

Author: Hannah Stopford, Community Partnerships & Development Manager

#### Highlights

- Somerset Connect Champion role has been extended and fully funded for another two years
- Skatepark fundraising and equalities research well underway.
- Young People's Grant Making programme awarded £10k to local projects for Children and Young People. Celebration event to be held 5<sup>th</sup> June.
- Community Grants round complete, advisory panel pilot successful, adaptations to be ratified at Community and Place meeting.
- My Frome trialled with various engagement projects and set to be a bit part of Brunel Green engagement and participatory support for Community Organisations.
- Mary Baily Co-design collaborative ready to show initial designs with young people for development of the space.
- Key Centre offers continue to expand, partnership with school progressing well, tender for nursery to go out shortly, and Play Day event planned for 5<sup>th</sup> August.
- Welcome Hub continuing to support local displaced people, events planned for Refugee Week and working with Frome Welcomes Refugees to support an application to become a Council of Sanctuary (coming to Council in June)
- St John's neighbourhood community garden ready to open gates to community to co-design and develop the space.
- Community Organisation support continuing with fundraising advice, training (Safeguarding) and networking sessions planned for the year ahead.
- Continuing to support the Volunteering for Health pilot and associated local organisations with exciting improvements to volunteering mechanisms such as shared training, support for recruitment and coordination etc.

#### Sticking points

- Some details around the land boundaries continue to delay the progression of the development of a tender for the community nursery at the Key Centre but partnership approach has helped move things along.
- There is a lot of change and uncertainty in the education world, both with changes to alternative provision and consultation about future tier changes. We are working hard to support education colleagues and ability for children and young people and parent voices to be heard in these discussions.

## Marketing & Communications

Author: Rachel Griffin, Marketing and Communications Manager

### Highlights

- Valentine's Day saw around 150 people take part in the pancake race with about a thousand spectators in the town centre - a joyful, slightly chaotic event that brought out a different cross section of the community. Supported by Andros UK, town centre businesses reported a noticeable uplift in footfall.
- Later that evening, we supported the Valentine Lamp lighting ceremony. This was the first time the road had been officially closed for the event, which felt like a significant step forward. Work is ongoing with the Friends of the Valentine Lamp as they take on responsibility for maintaining the lamp and stewarding the ceremony.
- Our Market Yard toilet engagement generated some genuinely insightful conversations. Over 150 people took part across two sessions, giving us a much richer understanding of how people use and feel about town centre facilities: Toilets really matter, but the detail will help shape future thinking.
- We were delighted to properly launch My Frome, putting the platform through its paces with live engagement on key projects including the skatepark, play area and Riverside conversations.
- More than 600 people came out to support the Community Woodland planting day – an outstanding team effort lead on by the brilliant rangers combining climate action, community drive expertise and participation and a really positive atmosphere on the day.
- We supported Donate IT back in January, helping to collect a significant number of devices for reuse.
- The White Ribbon campaign has gained good momentum, with strong recruitment to the working group. The work begins pivoting into tangible actions, including a focus on increasing uptake of the WalkSafe app.
- “Meet the Councillor” sessions resumed at the weekly market in March, launching on International Women's Day and providing a visible, informal way for residents to connect with councillors, and in the April session we joined councillors in Toilet conversations.
- Our My Frome platform is now live and hosting a growing range of engagement opportunities, with encouraging levels of interaction (covered in more detail elsewhere on the agenda).
- The new Discover Frome maps have experienced some delays but have now been ordered and will support the town's visitor and wayfinding offer.
- Social media has been consistently active, with a focus on clear, transparent communications around key decisions and positions, alongside promotion of events and initiatives.
- We are now full steam ahead on planning for the next quarter's events, including the Skate Jam, the first standalone Frome Pride parade, and our Frome Festival contribution – the Wildlife Parade, which brings together young people, creativity and environmental messaging in a joyful town centre moment.
- And creating a brief for a new website.

### Sticking points

- Capacity has felt stretched, particularly given the volume of events and the need to balance reactive communications with longer-term strategic work. The additional hours with Miles have helped alleviate that.

### Town Centre

Author: Katie Fraser, Town Centre Coordinator & Rachel Griffin Marketing and Communications Manager

### Highlights

- Positive engagement continues with Town Centre stakeholders following introduction of quarterly meetings which are well attended. Next meeting scheduled for 5th May – I can give a verbal update about that meeting.
- Positive engagement with the Neighbourhood Policing Team. We're looking forward to working closely with Frome and Shepton Mallet's new Sergeant PS 4085 Adrian Kettle.
- Working closely with several proprietors of empty retail premises and supporting renovations by facilitating access to expediate occupancy.
- Positive working relationship built with management of Westway Shopping Centre (Maybrook) and neighbouring landlords, to support the relocation of bins previously stored along Scott Road.
- Planter now installed on Scott Road in place of large bins and being looked after by local business.
- Our Secret Shopper Programme Pilot is now drawing to a close and has been very successful. Students have completed training, assessments, and delivered feedback to the library management. Final feedback session with Cheese & Grain in the diary.
- Commercial waste operatives have been invited to tender to be our preferred contract provider for town centre businesses and we have received several Expressions of Interest. Submission deadline 8th May.
- Following engagement, several venues are introducing clauses into contracts to encourage event promoters not to fly post advertising.
- Following initial stakeholder engagement on Frome's Riverside Vision, we took the opportunity to work with UWE MSc Architecture students to further develop thinking. Their work has been interesting and insightful, and we are now considering how to build on this to shape a wider, more cohesive vision for the area.
- After a hiatus, the bus stop project is now back on track following a positive meeting with Mark Stanystreet from Somerset Council.
- We submitted a Town of Culture bid and successfully galvanised stakeholder energy through a well-attended and engaging session. We are awaiting the outcome, and in the meantime are developing a brief to harness this momentum – including promoting Frome as a town of culture through Discover Frome.
- Planning is underway to support Palmer Street street party on 18 July.
- New bunting has now been installed along Cheap Street, adding to the town centre offer.
- Ranger Mike has carried out a full graffiti reset on bins and PCP boxes, while continuing to manage weeds through regular street sweeping.
- He is also preparing the surrounds for the new Discover Frome maps ahead of their arrival.

### Sticking points

- Engagement with venues to address flyposting on both public and private property has been challenging, particularly with those that operate primarily in the evenings.
- Graffiti continues to be a persistent issue across the town, often reappearing as quickly as it is removed, despite ongoing efforts and campaigns.
- Parking on Boyle Cross has become increasingly problematic, and we are working on potential solutions, including the introduction of a physical barrier.
- The events plugin on Discover Frome has not performed as expected; Amber is working with Zonkey to resolve this.
- Plans to engage more widely on the Riverside Vision have been delayed to align with the student work, and this next phase of engagement is yet to be scheduled.
- The Frome Independent has given notice on the management of the weekly market. An interim arrangement is in place, with a paper coming to Council to agree a longer-term solution.

### Climate Action

Author: Matt Mellen, Climate Action Lead

### Highlights

- National Emergency Briefing screening scheduled for Thursday 21 May, 7:00 PM at the Cheese and Grain
- Green Open Homes plans in development for autumn 2026
- School engagement process for nature connection and climate teaching resources has begun. The aim is to engage all of Frome's first schools. This will culminate with the Wildlife Parade on the 12 July
- Work is progressing on a sustainability data dashboard for Frome – showing, amongst other things, how much renewable energy is being generated in town
- Emma Parker has returned to FTC after her secondment to Frome Community Bike Project. She has started work leading on the materials and reuse section of our work programme
- Renewable energy coordination is progressing well. A new leaflet and communications push highlights the service we offer against the backdrop of another global energy price spike. Enquiries around solar energy are high
- Our home energy efficiency work is being tracked in a new spreadsheet and the data shows how this work helps the least well off in Frome
- A tendering process for fundraising support has begun with the aim of increasing the resourcing of climate action

### Sticking points

- There is still uncertainty around funding that will be available for community energy and home energy efficiency projects. We are working hard to have oven ready proposals in place to leap onto new opportunities as they arise
- The end of Green and Healthy Frome has been complex with lots of elements to pack down and round off. The team have had to work very hard to get the final evaluation across the line whilst staying on top of our daily tasks

Community Engagement & Development	
Aim: To improve the wellbeing and resilience of our community and the organisations that support them.	
Objective: A strong, connected community with resilient neighbourhoods where residents have the agency to create and access what they need.	
Project	Status
Continue to develop the Hub model	On track
Engage with residents at a street and neighbourhood level to build cohesion and resilience by working together on community-led projects	On track
Empower communities to identify gaps, strengths and assets and to take action or resolve conflict themselves	On track
Objective: Community organisations are supported to meet Frome's needs, be self-sufficient and work together and adapt to change.	
Project	Status
Support and build capacity for community organisations	On track
Objective: Residents feel included in the life of the town	
Project	Status
Embed inclusive and accessible practices and processes, internally and with partners	On track
Increase opportunities for meaningful engagement and ways for all voices to be heard and for residents to influence local decision making	On track
Embed the inclusive play strategy across the town especially in our parks and open spaces	On track
Objective: FTC teams are supported with community engagement to deliver their outcomes	
Project	Status
Work collaboratively with other FTC teams to deliver collaborative and engagement processes to deliver their outcomes	On track
Community grants	
Support community organisations to access appropriate funding	On track

Key:



On track



Project no longer on track without amendment



Project has been unsuccessful or stopped

Marketing & Communications	
Aim: To foster an informed, engaged, and cohesive community in Frome by delivering innovative communications, participatory initiatives, and inclusive events that strengthen collaboration, celebrate Frome, and support decision-making for a thriving town	
Objective: Inform and engage residents around the work of the council to encourage participation.	
Project	Status
FTC communications	
Through community engagement develop a new and ambitious town-wide climate action plan (CAP) and coordinate actions by organisations in the town to implement it. Put in place an evaluation framework.	
Support a programme of activity that enables people living and working in Frome to participate and engage in decision making.	
Support delivery of Town Events	
Ensure that the Town Hall is safe, accessible, clean, fit for purpose and well used	

Town Centre	
Aim: To progress several key initiatives that will improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre	
Objective: Increased visitor and resident footfall to support our local businesses	
Objective: Improve the image, experience and pride in the town centre encouraging more residents and visitors to visit and use its facilities	
Project	Status
Improve the appearance of the Town Centre	
Encourage the occupation of empty shops and other vacancies	
Town Centre Events	
Support delivery of Town Events	
Promote the town and its events to residents and visitors	
Promote active travel and sustainable transport to encourage visits to Frome	
Maintain the You're Welcome project	
Footfall Data	
Mitigation: See report above for our response to the issues with 'Intelli-Sense' data	

Climate & Ecological emergencies	
Aim: To co-ordinate town action to mitigate and adapt to climate change	
Objective: ENGAGE & ACT - Enable individuals and organisations to make changes that contribute towards a net zero carbon Frome in 2030 and make a difference to their health, wellbeing and economic sustainability	
Project	Status
Track all appropriate climate metrics and keep councillors, stakeholders and the public up to date with climate science and impacts for Frome	
Climate adaptation planning - present climate scenarios and risks for Frome.	
Through engagement with the community bring sustainability data to life for people in Frome. Help people to visualise climate scenarios and how effective our response is.	
Convene meetings, liaise between groups, lead actions, enable innovation and collaboration. Host the Frome Climate Action WhatsApp Group	
Involve schools in climate action	
Produce climate engagement events	
Working with key stakeholders we want to keep evolving our climate strategy	
Campaign on key issues - community energy, nature recovery, green growth	
Objective: ENERGY - Enable the scaling up of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy generation	
Project	Status
Townwide renewable energy coordination	
Support and enhance FRECo to drive an increase in the number of new community owned renewable energy projects in Frome	
Support Frome householders on their retrofitting journey	
CSE assess 50 homes per year and provide retrofit support	
Provide energy efficiency advice and support - online, in person and at events	
Objective: MATERIALS & WASTE - Develop a circular economy in Frome, reducing the amount of waste leaving Frome and encouraging reuse and recycling.	
Project	Status
Use Keep It Frome as our brand for nurturing and promoting a circular economy in Frome	
Take substantive steps towards the launch of a re-use centre in Frome, for example, by commissioning a feasibility study. Work with Somerset Council and other partners to find a site for a reuse centre	