

Minutes of a meeting of the Community and Place Committee

Wednesday 1 October 2025, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Carla Collenette (Chair), Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Andy Jones, Lisa Merryweather

In attendance:

Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Hannah Stopford (Engagement Lead), Nikki Cox (Partnership Lead), Emily Osler (Community Engagement Officer), Laura Hales (Marketing and Communications Officer), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

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

2 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qo_LAV8S5Zo&t=6133s

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2025/13/CP	<p>1a. Apologies for absence</p> <p>Fiona Barrows proposed to accept apologies from Tracey Ashford, Anne Hills and Ben Still, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests</p> <p>None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 6 August 2025</p> <p>The minutes of the Community and Place Committee meeting held on 6 August 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2025/14/CP	<p>2. Questions from public and Cllrs</p> <p>None was received.</p>	
2025/15/CP	<p>3. A discussion on building Community resilience</p> <p>Hannah Stopford gave a presentation on building community resilience. She provided context on the importance of social capital and connectivity as key components of community resilience. Drawing on experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic,</p>	

	<p>she highlighted how informal neighbourhood networks had reduced the need for formal support and demonstrated the power of local connections. She explained that social capital refers to the relationships and structures that help people access support and opportunities, and that connectivity describes the strength of those relationships.</p> <p>Hannah outlined the values and approaches of the Communities Team, including listening deeply, working without judgement, focusing on strengths rather than deficits, and supporting community-led initiatives. She emphasised the importance of reaching marginalised groups and working in partnership with local organisations. The team's work included co-designing projects with young people, supporting community events, and building relationships with housing associations.</p> <p>Cllrs and officers engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on how to build social capital in Frome. Topics included the importance of early engagement in new housing developments, the role of green spaces in fostering community, and the need to support residents who feel isolated or marginalised. Cllrs noted that some areas of Frome lacked visible community activity and suggested that more proactive outreach could help uncover hidden networks and needs.</p>	
2025/16/CP	<p>4. For decision – Marketing and Communications - Communicating with us</p> <p>Rachel Griffin presented a summary of the report. The findings were generally positive, with two-thirds of respondents feeling well-informed and 89% reporting no difficulty contacting the Council. The most valued communication channels were the printed newsletter, e-newsletters, and Facebook. However, concerns were raised about the website's usability and the need for clearer information about the Council's responsibilities versus those of Somerset Council.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows stressed the importance of face-to-face engagement. She noted that while digital channels are effective, many residents are not digitally connected and therefore need opportunities to meet Cllrs in person. Fiona suggested holding council meetings in different parts of town or organising informal listening events to make councillors more accessible.</p> <p>Anita Collier agreed and added that Council should focus on listening rather than simply broadcasting information. She emphasised that residents value meaningful conversations and that engagement should feel authentic rather than transactional.</p>	

	<p>She also raised concerns about the younger demographic, pointing out that the survey showed limited engagement from young people. She suggested exploring partnerships with schools and colleges and considering creative ways to reach this audience.</p> <p>Steve Tanner highlighted the need for clarity in messaging, particularly around council decisions and responsibilities. He observed that confusion persists about what falls under Frome Town Council's remit versus Somerset Council's and argued that clearer communication would reduce frustration among residents. Steve also supported the idea of Cllrs being visible in the community, noting that this could help build trust and understanding.</p> <p>Carla Collenette reflected on the survey's finding that 40% of respondents wanted more opportunities to speak to Cllrs in person. She suggested this could be addressed through community-based events and by including Cllr details in welcome packs for new residents. Carla also raised the possibility of linking engagement activities with existing council projects to maximise impact.</p> <p>Nick Dove focused on the need for communications to be engaging and relevant. He argued that residents were more likely to participate when they felt their input mattered and when topics were meaningful to them. Nick suggested that the upcoming digital engagement tool could help but cautioned that it should complement rather than replace personal interaction.</p> <p>Cllrs also discussed the website and felt it was difficult to navigate and was outdated. They supported plans to review and refresh it to make information easier to find. There was consensus that improving clarity, accessibility, and opportunities for direct engagement should be priorities for the communications strategy going forward.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To delegate to the Marketing and Communication Manager to review the marketing and communication strategy and ensure that implementation is in line with this report's conclusions 2. Scope out a new website <p>Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	RG RG
2025/17/CP	6. For decision - Marketing and Communications Events Brought forward to item 5	

	<p>Rachel Griffin presented a list of current and proposed events, noting the significant time and resources required to support them. Cllrs discussed the need for a clearer process to evaluate events based on strategic objectives, target audiences, expected outcomes, and resource implications. It was agreed that a filtering process would be developed to assess future events and that existing commitments would be honoured.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the potential impact of road closures on upcoming events, particularly for the Christmas lights switch-on. Rachel confirmed that alternative arrangements were being made, including reversing the parade route and coordinating with Somerset Highways to manage traffic and parking.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows expressed concern that the current events programme felt overloaded and risked diluting impact. She suggested thinking strategically about which events to prioritise, possibly by setting limits or allocating event budgets to different work areas. She emphasised that fewer, well-planned events could achieve greater visibility and engagement than a large number of smaller activities.</p> <p>Anita Collier agreed and highlighted the need for clarity on why events were chosen and what outcomes they aimed to deliver. She felt that some events appeared disconnected from strategic objectives and called for a transparent process to evaluate them. Anita also suggested that events should be designed to maximise community benefit and Cllr visibility, rather than simply filling the calendar.</p> <p>Steve Tanner raised the issue of resource allocation, noting that some events consumed significant staff time and questioned whether this represented good value. He argued that Cllrs needed better information on the cost and impact of each event before making decisions. Steve supported the idea of a filtering process that considered strategic alignment, target audience, and measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Carla Collenette observed that events could be used more effectively to strengthen community engagement and Cllr presence. She proposed linking events with opportunities for residents to meet Cllrs and learn about council projects. Carla also suggested that FTC should explore ways to combine multiple objectives within single events to make them work harder.</p> <p>Nick Dove argued that without clear data on outcomes, it was difficult to justify the time and resources invested in events. Nick suggested developing baseline measures and tracking engagement</p>	
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	<p>to ensure that events delivered tangible benefits aligned with council priorities.</p> <p>There was consensus that a formal process should be introduced to assess events against clear criteria, including strategic objectives, expected outcomes, resource requirements, and sponsorship.</p> <p>It was agreed that Paul Wynne and Rachel Griffin would put together a process and email it to committee members in the next few days. It was also agreed to continue with events already in process but reconsider the events that were likely to come up and process them through the filter before committing to them.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the changes to upcoming events in the table (changes in purple) 2. Don't agree the additions and changes to the programme of events as set out above for the upcoming year <p>Proposed by Carla Collenette, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWy/RG
2025/18/CP	<p>5. For decision – For Frome Town Council to seek White Ribbon accreditation</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report which outlined a proposal to seek White Ribbon accreditation, which aimed to engage male allies in preventing violence against women and girls.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FTC to seek White Ribbon accreditation and show its commitment to combatting gender-based violence and the attitudes and behaviours that underpin it. 2. Commit to £495 a year for three years to enable the application, which will be delegated to Marketing and Communications Lead, Lucy McMahon <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	LM
2025/19/CP	<p>7. For information – Review of the Community Engagement & Development, Climate Emergency & Resilience, Marketing & Communications and Town Centre work programmes</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The committee reviewed progress updates across various workstreams. Cllrs praised the improvements at the Key Centre and the clarity of the traffic-light reporting format. It was</p>	

	suggested that future updates include brief notes on mitigation actions for projects marked as off-track.	PWY
2025/20/CP	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 17 December 2025, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.48pm