

## Agenda item 6

For decision - To approve the next steps for an FTC approach to grant making in our town and an update on FTC Community Grants Scheme

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Last year, our Community Grants Scheme and Mayor’s Grants awarded over £70,000 to 33 local organisations ([see Appendix 6.1 on page 3 of this report](#)), enabling them to deliver impactful projects aligned with the council’s vision. These projects ranged from community growing initiatives and arts events to active travel campaigns, volunteering coordination, and therapeutic work.

Our grants scheme has evolved through thoughtful design and responsiveness to community feedback. Last year marked the first time the scheme operated within a committee structure, enhancing transparency in decision-making. Public meetings have been well received, fostering a sense of collaboration and mutual support among applicants.

### Wider grant support for organisations

Beyond direct grant making, FTC’s Communities Team delivers a more extensive offer of support, including guidance on fundraising and governance to help groups secure funding from external sources. We host networking events that better enable collaboration and partnerships between groups whose aims and ambitions overlap. We have also commissioned work from external partners that has enabled them to leverage match funding from other sources and amplify our investment in their work.

### Funding landscape in Frome

Findings from last year’s [Picture of Frome](#) research indicate that, in recent years, Frome-based organisations have received less funding from major grant providers compared to the regional average. We’re not sure but this finding could be skewed by Glastonbury (£23.6m), Bridgewater (£23.2m) and Swindon (£19.5m), for example, receiving Government Town Deal funding that Frome is ineligible for. Frome also has many smaller organisations securing smaller and diverse funding streams that do not appear in regional data. Even so, this discrepancy remains notable, and the objective remains the same: we should work to increase the number and amount of external grants coming to Frome.

In response, we have begun mapping both the grants FTC has secured and those we have supported other organisations in accessing. This ongoing analysis will offer a clearer picture of the local funding landscape and inform our future approach.

### Value of funding for FTC and partners in 2024/2025

	Secured funding	Anticipated funding	Unsuccessful applications
Funding that is directly for FTC work	£743,197	£317,000	£490,950

Funding the FTC has enabled other organisations to apply for	£579,454	£5,000	£1,990,500
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### Future Approach to Grant-Making in Frome

There is significant interest in exploring different ways we might deliver community grants in Frome, and our [Council Plan](#) (p7) states a commitment to increasing external funding for council and community projects. Alternative models could increase funding capacity in our town while helping to increase community participation in decision-making and diversification of the groups involved, which is one of our work programme projects for the year ahead.

Before considering structural changes for a meaningful offer for our town, it is prudent to explore local funding needs, existing gaps and external funding opportunities. (This is thinking about grant making in the town as a whole rather than simply redesigning our own Community Grants scheme). To achieve this, we propose a three-pronged approach:

#### 1. Funding Needs Assessment

Conduct a detailed mapping exercise with community organisations that rely on grants and with other local bodies managing their own grant schemes. This will establish a clear understanding of funding needs and gaps in grant provision.

#### 2. External Funding Opportunities

Undertake a scoping study to identify external funding sources that could be leveraged to benefit Frome's community projects and Town Council work.

#### 3. Pilot Participatory Grant Making

We await the result of our Expression of Interest in The National Lottery's *You Decide* project, which wants to pilot participatory ways of grant making, could boost additional onward grants. Regardless of success, we propose to experiment with participatory grant-making using a portion of the existing Community Grants budget. There will be a focus on underrepresented groups, such as young people, by co-designing a grants model that includes them in decision-making.

Following discussion with members of the grants committee, it is recommended commissioning the first two components to ensure comprehensive research, with a proposed budget allocation of £8,000 (10% of this year's grants budget). The participatory grant-making pilot will be managed in-house by the Communities Team and utilise part of the current grant budget. This combined approach will establish a robust evidence base to guide future decisions on alternative funding structures that best serve our town.

### Recommendations

1. Delegate the commissioning of the funding needs assessment and external funding scoping to the Communities Team in collaboration with Grants Committee members.
2. Approve the allocation of £8,000 from this year's grants budget to support this work.

### Appendix 6.1

#### FTC Grants awarded 2024/2025

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Amount Paid</b>
Mind Your Music	£2,000.00
The Pod	£2,500.00
We Hear You (WHY)	£2,000.00
Purple Elephant	£2,000.00
Frome Area Community Land Trust (FACLT)	£1,000.00
Wise Children	£1,000.00
Frome Field 2 Fork	£2,000.00
VOICES	£2,500.00
TOP – Triumph Over Phobia	£1,500.00
Make the Sunshine CIC	£500.00
The Good Heart	£4,535.00
Vallis First School Association	£2,500.00
Frome Town Band	£2,720.00
Merlin Theatre	£3,000.00
Better Nature	£3,490.00
FromeFM	£2,121.00
Frome Festival	£2,235.00
Frome Selwood Bowls Club	£1,495.28
Macular Society Frome Support Group (Mayor's grant)	£300.00
Frome Museum	£1,600.00
RisingUp	£2,900.00
Ecos Court Veg Patch	£2,600.00
Frome International Climate Film Festival	£1,050.00
Evolve Music	£1,995.00
Forward Step Tutoring	£1,500.00
Somerset Farmer's Market	£2,000.00

Black Swan Arts	£1,000.00
Frome Monthly Women's Circle	£3,000.00
Somerset Bus Partnership/Frome & Villages Bus User Group (FAVBUG)	£1,995.00
Photo Frome	£3,000.00
Edventure Frome CIC	£2,000.00
Youth Production Network CIC	£3,000.00
We are Connectors	£3,000.00
<b>Total Paid:</b>	<b>£70,036.28</b>

## FTC Grants awarded 2023/2024

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Amount Paid</b>
Purple Elephant Family Support	£2,310.00
Frome Independent	£2,500.00
The Equivalent Project CIC	£1,500.00
Frome Festival	£2,500.00
Frome Street Carnival	£3,000.00
Frome Town Band	£2,000.00
Mothership (Caravan Arts CIC)	£1,600.00
Black Swan Arts Ltd	£3,000.00
Broadway Community Gardens Association	£2,990.00
Good Heart	£6,137.00
Single Mothers United Together (Good Heart)	£1,200.00
Frome Neighbourhood Network	£2,829.00
SHARE Frome	£1,995.00
Frome Medical Practice (FMP) on behalf of Frome Medical Centre	£1,000.00
Frome Autism and ADHD Parent Forum	£3,000.00
Byword Theatre	£1,000.00
Frome Festival	£1,995.00
Frome Birth Talk	£3,000.00
Journeyman Mentoring Network Limited	£3,000.00
Evolve Music	£1,995.00
Focus Frome	£3,000.00
1st and 7th Frome 'Jubilee' Scouts	£1,995.00
Young People Frome	£1,995.00
Openstorytellers	£1,995.00

Shared Earth Learning	£1,995.00
Somerset Bus Partnership/Frome & Villages Bus User Group (FAVBUG)	£1,995.00
Frome Families for the Future	£3,000.00
Super Roots Outdoor Kids CIC	£1,995.00
<b>Total Paid:</b>	<b>£66,521.00</b>