

Minutes of a meeting of the Oversight Committee

Wednesday 26 March 2025, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Fiona Barrows, Mark Dorrington (Chair), Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Steve Tanner

In attendance:

Lucy Rae (Scrapstore), Sarah Williams (Business Manager, online), Nikki Cox (Partnership Lead), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Jay Hanton (Lead Ranger), Town Rangers: Toni Duddridge, Mark Branson, Asia Pryjda, Mark Scopes, Mike Wright (Town Centre Ranger), Laura O'Brien (Assistant Ranger), Helen Viner (Tree Officer), Jo Morris (Resilience Project Officer), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer)

o members of the public was in attendance at Frome Town Hall
o members of the public were in attendance on Zoom

To watch the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7gV-WgrBfk

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2025/15/OS	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Andy Jones proposed to accept apologies from Ben Still and Mel Usher, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was were declared.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 29 January 2025 Nikki Cox confirmed that FTC/Chard Town Council/Terrestrial Arts had been successful in the grant application to SALC's health and wellbeing fund for £35k.</p> <p>Nick Dove noted that he and Peter Wheelhouse had shortlisted candidates to interview for the Town Centre Coordinator next week.</p> <p>The minutes of the Oversight Committee meeting held on 29 January 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p>	

2025/16/OS	<p>2. Questions and comments</p> <p>Nick Dove noted that the new weeding machine had been delivered and was working well.</p>	
2025/17/OS	<p>3. A short presentation from the Scrapstore on the update to the Play Strategy for 2025</p> <p>Nikki Cox introduced the presentation saying that Scrapstore has been commissioned in 2021 to draft a Play Strategy on behalf of FTC and they had been commissioned again to review progress.</p> <p>Lucy from Scrapstore highlighted the ambitions and recommendations of the play strategy that focused on time, space and permission for play, with nine ambitions including increasing play opportunities, enhancing existing play spaces, and encouraging doorstep play.</p> <p>Lucy discussed the progress made in various areas, such as playful pop-ups, local networks, and community garden developments.</p> <p>There was a discussion on the merits or otherwise of age-specific play areas to reduce intimidation and the need for more dedicated spaces for teenagers. The conversation touched on the importance of risky play and how to make it safe for different age groups.</p>	
2025/18/OS	<p>4. For information - Review of Nurture Open Spaces Work Programme</p> <p>Rob Holden introduced a quarterly update on open spaces, focusing on the work of the Ranger team and their many contributions.</p> <p>Asia Pryjda, Town Ranger, introduced a video showcasing the Ranger team's work, highlighting their activities, events, and community engagement. The video can be seen here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8qxvflzYTY</p> <p>Mark Scopes spoke about his hedge laying projects. The team had received grant funding for hedge laying training and had recently completed a 100-metre section of hedge at Weylands.</p> <p>Helen Viner noted she had grafted 120 apple trees that were then distributed to Frome College for community projects, the Frome Seed Library and also via a successful tree giveaway event. Helen's future plans were to continue grafting and expanding the heritage apple tree collection in the town.</p> <p>Jo Morris' work was focused on the nature recovery and had recently launched a Community Wildlife mapping project. On behalf of FTC, she would be partnering with Somerset Wildlife Trust and developing a combined climate adaptation and nature recovery plan. Some upcoming</p>	

	<p>projects included wildlife-friendly gardening, linking gardens with green spaces.</p> <p>Laura O'Brien was the newest member of ranger the team. Some of her initial projects including the hedge laying project, tree planting, the Milk Street landscaping project, tidying up Chateau Gontier Walk, graffiti removal, and assisting Mike, the Town Ranger, with various tasks. Laura enjoyed the variety of the role and the need to be adaptable.</p> <p>Cllrs thanked the Ranger team for the presentation and their continued hard work.</p>	
2025/19/OS	<p>5. For decision – Proposal to adopt new management plans for Mary Baily and Victoria Park</p> <p>Rob Holden presented the new format for management plans, explaining the process of site description, vision, aims, and objectives.</p> <p>Andy Jones suggested adding a QR code to each site for quick information access. Fiona Barrows suggested adding a photo montage to bring the plans to life and adding more connections between different strategies (play strategy, nature recovery plan). Steve Tanner suggested adding a historical notice board with site history. Rob said he would explore these.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the new format of the Management Plans 2. Adopt the Management Plan for Mary Baily 3. Adopt the Management Plan for Victoria Park <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p>	RH
2025/20/OS	<p>6. For decision – Proposal for changing the access at Henley Way</p> <p>Rob Holden said the current wooden ramp needed replacing with a new ramp and/or steps.</p> <p>The cost replacing the ramp with either wood or steel and the lower cost of installing steps only were discussed.</p> <p>The importance of accessibility and the impact on the community were emphasised. Rob Holden explained the implications of replacing a ramp with steps, emphasising the need for clear reasons and reasonable alternatives as per legislation including the Equality Act.</p> <p>He also noted the impact on people with mobility issues, young mothers with pushchairs, and residents of a nearby retirement home of just installing steps, not the ramp.</p> <p>The additional cost of installing a ramp as opposed to just the steps was £100k and Mark Dorrington asked Sarah Williams if sourcing that would be</p>	

	<p>possible. Sarah explained that the additional funds could come from the General Reserve.</p> <p>Nick Dove's view was that the steps were a more practical solution, and that the town had many other inaccessible areas.</p> <p>Steve Tanner suggested considering the possibility of installing a ramp in the future if funds became available.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows expressed her disappointment with the decision, highlighting the importance of maintaining accessible routes for enjoyment and exercise.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the change in access at Henley Way from ramp and steps to just steps with the option of installing a ramp in the future if funds allow 2. Approve the spending of £40k on the project from budget code 700-7938 as set out in the council approved 25/26 work programme <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Steve Tanner , agreed by majority. Fiona Barrows abstained.</p>	
2025/21/OS	<p>7. For information - Update on Marketing and Communications work programme</p> <p>Lucy McMahon provided an overview of the work of the communications and marketing team, including roles and responsibilities of the team members.</p> <p>Lucy presented the performance of both the Frome Town Council and Discover Frome websites. Both of which had seen steady growth and high engagement.</p> <p>Lucy mentioned the usefulness AI presented for data analysis and the importance of involving Cllrs in growing newsletter audiences.</p>	
2025/22/OS	<p>8. For decision - Marketing and Communications Events</p> <p>Lucy McMahon outlined the upcoming events for the year, categorising them into FTC events, semi-autonomous events, fully autonomous events, and wider team projects.</p> <p>Recent events like the Tech Amnesty, wassail, International Women's Day and Window Wanderland had all been successful.</p> <p>Lucy highlighted the proposed new events include a photography exhibition, a road closure for Palmer Street to enable pedestrian street use, a Catherine Hill fashion show and free family events at the Frome</p>	

	<p>Festival. Lucy noted there was a need to refresh and innovate the events calendar while managing a busy schedule.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington questioned the staff time required for the Remembrance Day Parade. Andy Jones questioned the staff time required for the Palmer Street road closure. Fiona Barrows explained that events like these took a lot of staff time in the planning and coordination. She also expressed her appreciation for the International Women's Day event and the positive impact it had.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the changes to up-coming events in the table (changes in Purple) 2. Agree the additions and changes to the programme of events as set out above for the upcoming year <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2025/23/OS	<p>9. For decision and approval – Internal Auditor (IA) Recommendations A summary of the report was given by Sarah Williams.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appoint the Business Manager Sarah Williams as Responsible Finance Officer 2. Adopt the Investment Policy 3. Note the Parish Remuneration Panel report and have regard to the recommendations of the panel for Councillor allowances. 4. Approve the disposal of assets <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2025/24/OS	<p>10. For decision – Approval of Chapter 7 Staff and Cllrs' Protocol Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the annual review of Chapter 7 Staff and Cllrs' Protocol.</p> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed by majority. Fiona Barrows abstained.</p>	
2025/25/OS	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 7 May 2025, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.55pm