

Minutes of an Annual meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 21 May 2025, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Fiona Barrows, Philip Campagna, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather, Steve Tanner, Max Wide

In attendance:

Cllr Dawn Denton (SC Cllr, online), Cllr Shane Collins (SC Cllr), Cllr Helen Kay (SC Cllr, online), Cllr Adam Boyden (SC Cllr, online), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Peter Wheelhouse (Economic Development and Regeneration Manager), Rob Holden (Environment Manager)

9 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall

1 member of the public was in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSeXhVI4xeo&t=655s

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2025/36/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>The Chair of Council, Cllr Andy Jones sent his apologies. In his absence Fiona Barrows proposed Steve Tanner as Chair of the meeting, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously. Steve took the chair.</p> <p>Max Wide arrived at 7.02pm</p> <p>1. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair</p> <p>Nick Dove proposed Fiona Barrows as Chair 2025/26, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed by majority. Fiona Barrows abstained.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows expressed her emotional response to being proposed as the new Chair, sharing her struggles with mental health and late diagnosis of ADHD. Fiona highlighted the importance of inclusivity in local democracy, emphasising that her election created conditions for others to take on similar roles. She noted the challenges faced by local communities, including the housing crisis, marginalisation of young people, and struggles of local businesses. Fiona called for a bold and innovative approach to make Frome a more resilient and fairer place, thanking the council for voting her in.</p>	

	<p>Fiona Barrows took the Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather proposed Anita Collier as Deputy Chair 2025/26, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed by majority. Anita Collier abstained. Anita signed the declaration of acceptance of office.</p>	
2025/37/FC	<p>2a. Apologies for absence Max Wide proposed to accept apologies from Carla Collenette, Andy Jones, Ben Still and Mel Usher, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>2b. Declaration of members' interests None was declared.</p> <p>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 30 April 2025 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 30 April 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Polly Lamb, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2025/38/FC	<p>3. Questions from public and Cllrs Lenka Grimes raised concerns about a motion regarding housing and asylum seekers at Somerset Council, which she felt was divisive and misleading. She highlighted the issue of Airbnb properties contributing to the housing crisis and called for action to address it. Steve Tanner offered to meet with Lenka to discuss the data around second homes and Airbnb's in Frome.</p> <p>Nick Dove was concerned about Somerset Council's poor response to issues reported through Fix My Street and also provided examples of unanswered emails and requests for meetings, highlighting the need for better communication and service delivery. Fiona Barrows suggested trying to address the issue with Somerset Council formally and exploring a system for raising issues.</p> <p>Nick also asked whether there was a system in place for staff to record how much time they spent different projects. Paul Wynne replied that there wasn't.</p> <p>Tracey Ashford arrived at 7.21pm.</p>	ST

2025/39/FC	<p>4. For decision - Adoption of Standing Orders and the Cllr Code of Conduct, and confirmation that FTC retains the General Power of Competence</p> <p>Paul Wynne explained the main changes to the standing orders were merging the roles of Leader and Chair and establishing two new committees: Community and Place and Operations and Assets.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows and Polly Lamb discussed the importance of defining the scope of discussions in Council meetings to make them more focused.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Standing Orders at Appendix 4.1 2. Approve the Cllrs' Code of Conduct at Appendix 4.2 <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2025/40/FC	<p>5. For decision - Calendar of meetings 2025/26 starting May 2025</p> <p>Laura Flaherty presented the calendar of meetings for 2025-2026 noting changes due to the introduction of the two new committees. She highlighted that two extraordinary meetings were scheduled for 4 June to discuss Badgers Hill and 18 June to sign off the annual governance and accountability return.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the new calendar of meetings for 2025/26 which includes the newly created Community and Place Committee and Operations and Assets Committee.</p> <p>Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Max Wide, agreed unanimously.</p>	LF
2025/41/FC	<p>6. For decision – To elect the membership and chairs of the Community and Place, Operations and Assets, Planning and Grants committees, and appoint Lead Cllrs</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report that included proposed membership.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive proposals for membership of the Community and Place committee <p>Proposed members:</p>	

	<p>Tracey Ashford Fiona Barrows Sara Butler Cara Collenette Anita Collier Mark Dorrington Nick Dove Anne Hills Andy Jones Lisa Merryweather Ben Still Steve Tanner</p> <p>2. To receive proposals for membership of the Operation and Assets committee</p> <p>Proposed members: Fiona Barrows Philp Campagna Mark Dorrington Anne Hills Andy Jones Polly Lamb Steve Tanner Mel Usher</p> <p>3. To receive proposals for membership of the Planning committee</p> <p>Proposed members: Fiona Barrows Philip Campagna Mark Dorrington Andy Jones Polly Lamb Steve Tanner</p> <p>4. To receive proposals for membership of the Grants committee</p> <p>Proposed members: Tracey Ashford Fiona Barrows Philip Campagna Anita Collier Anne Hills Andy Jones Steve Tanner</p>	
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	<p>5. Appoint the Lead Cllrs as described in the report above.</p> <p>The proposed Lead Cllrs were:</p> <table><tr><th>Work programme area</th><th>Lead Cllr</th></tr><tr><td>Community Engagement and Development</td><td>Carla Collette</td></tr><tr><td>Buildings (Badgers Hill, Cheese and Grain, Key Centre and Frome Town Hall)</td><td>Steve Tanner</td></tr><tr><td>Open Spaces</td><td>Mark Dorrington</td></tr><tr><td>Devolution</td><td>Max Wide</td></tr><tr><td>Town Centre</td><td>Nick Dove</td></tr><tr><td>Climate Emergency and Resilience (incl. Green and Healthy Frome)</td><td>Fiona Barrows</td></tr><tr><td>Planning and Transport</td><td>Steve Tanner</td></tr><tr><td>Business Services</td><td>Anne Hills and Andy Jones</td></tr></table> <p>Mark Dorrington proposed to accept the membership of the Community and Place, Operations and Assets, Planning and Grants committees, and the Lead Cllrs, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	Work programme area	Lead Cllr	Community Engagement and Development	Carla Collette	Buildings (Badgers Hill, Cheese and Grain, Key Centre and Frome Town Hall)	Steve Tanner	Open Spaces	Mark Dorrington	Devolution	Max Wide	Town Centre	Nick Dove	Climate Emergency and Resilience (incl. Green and Healthy Frome)	Fiona Barrows	Planning and Transport	Steve Tanner	Business Services	Anne Hills and Andy Jones	
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2025/42/FC	<p>7. For decision - To decide on Cllrs and the Chair's allowance</p> <p>Paul Wynne presented the rent.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report and in particular the recommendations of the Somerset Parish Remuneration Panel as well as the legal advice sought from Bevan Brittan.</p> <p>Anne Hills and Nick Dove supported the proposal, emphasising the importance of making the role accessible to a wider pool of people.</p> <p>Max Wide clarified that the allowance was intended to enable Fiona to take on the role, not to establish an allowance in perpetuity.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the amount of the chair's allowance and Steve Tanner proposed to set the Chair's allowance at £15k for 2025/26, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather, Philip Campagna and Fiona Barrows abstained.</p>																			

	<p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set the Cllr's allowance for 2025/26 at £1,291 <p>Proposed by Steve Tanner, seconded by Max Wide, agreed unanimously.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Set the Chair of the Council's allowance for 2025/26 at £15k to be drawn from the General Reserve. <p>Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather, Philip Campagna and Fiona Barrows abstained.</p> <p>Anita Collier thanked the council for their confidence in her as Deputy Chair and expressed she was looking forward to working with Fiona.</p> <p>Lisa, on behalf of the Cllrs, thanked Steve Tanner for leading the council in 2024/25 and Andy Jones for performing the role of Mayor.</p>	
2025/43/FC	The next meeting will be an extraordinary meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 5 June 2025, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the public meeting at: 7.56pm