

Agenda item 6

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

Community Engagement & Development

Authors: Nikki Cox, Partnership Lead and Hannah Stopford, Engagement Lead

Highlights

Hub Model

- The Welcome Hub has secured continuation funding for the next 2 years and is working with a collective of organisations to redesign the service delivery model.
- The Key Centre has been taken on by FTC, Sarah Walton is in post as a Co-ordinator - development and growth of the building is underway to maximise community use.
- Connect Somerset work is being taken forward with Emma Lacey-Williams taking over as our local Champion.

Neighbourhood engagement

- The lease for a community garden in St Johns has been secured and Emily Osler is building on the engagement begun in this area to centre on a shared community space.
- Liz is engaging with the community in the Mount to focus on the Key Centre and Cabin and working with Sarah Walton to engage stakeholders.
- The money secured from SALC for the 'Adventures in your Neighbourhood' project has started at St Johns with a successful series of events at the school and with the local residents, culminating in a neighbourhood festival on 12th July. This work will come to the Mount in the winter. This project uses art and play to bring together communities and local schools to make connections come alive and celebrate what matters to people in the places they live.
- Emily and Liz have been working closely with the Rangers and Helen to look at devolved open spaces - engagement work has started in the Wallington Way estate. Support for Super Roots and Shared Earth Learning with a mural project with Young People on the hoardings at the entrance to the estate. A celebration of this work will coincide with engagement activity around the open spaces.
- Following the success of the transformation of 'Milk Street Green' in Trinity there have been cross-team projects on mulching activities and local street planter installation.
- Responsive support for neighbourhoods to install and manage share boxes in various neighbourhoods.

Empowering communities

- Let's Talk have developed a community organisation support model and have rolled out training and workshops for Fair Frome, FTC, Somerset Youth Alliance and others.
- Liz and Sarah are developing a Friends of Key Centre group to co-design the offer here with residents and stakeholders.

Organisational support

- FTC continues to support local VCFSE groups and ran a successful 'Open Space' event at Badgers Hill in partnership with Terrestrial, letting attendees set the agenda and collaborate on solutions together.
- Ruth Knagg continues to offer valued support around fundraising and governance.
- The FTC team offers responsive support to groups such as working with Frome Museum to develop their strategic aims.
- We are hosting Spark Somerset's Development Manager Karen and working closely with her on their 'Volunteering for Health' pilot project to trial solutions to improving the volunteer landscape in Frome.

Embed inclusive practise

- The engagement team supported with the town centre audit and the proposed changes to Henley Way ramp.
- Initial steps to auditing equalities approach with managers undertaken and trial of an Equalities impact assessment.
- Emily following up on International Women's Day actions to map provision of safe spaces in town.
- Signposting management team to national policy changes and requirements.

Including All Voices

- Melody and Hannah preparing to launch Young People's Participatory Grant Making Pilot project with Year 8s in September.
- Mary Baily co-design project awarded to collaborative group of Woodland Tribe, Super Roots and Neighbourhood Toolbox.
- Working with Comms team to explore digital participatory platforms to enhance engagement work.

Play Strategy

- Mary Baily project will work with young people to co-design and create a space near current skatepark.
- Nikki working closely with Environment Team on progression of skatepark project.
- Engaged with Critchill school on replacement of Egford Park play equipment.
- Worked with Green play to ensure accessibility of new play tower at Welshmill park.
- Commissioning of play providers to deliver sessions in neighbourhoods over the summer including for Play Day in Edmund Park (6th August).

Community Grants and Funding

- Working with Locality on research project to map funding landscape in Frome to inform discussions around Frome Fund.
- Hannah in the process of interviewing all local funders to have the full picture of available local funds.
- Young People's participatory grant making pilot will also inform this work
- First round of FTC Community Grant complete and next round planned for opening in Autumn – to incorporate a resident's panel stage to improve participation.

Supporting other Teams

- Working with Climate Action Lead to explore reuse centre models, options and stakeholders/partners.
- Supporting engagement on new Climate Adaptation plan.
- Working with Environment team to engage on newly acquired open spaces.

Sticking points

- There are sticky elements to transitioning to managing the Key Centre as a fully functioning community asset – waiting for a Facilities Manager to come into post; a need to update systems; slightly complicated partnerships with the Academy Trust and Baptist Church, for example. None are barriers but combined are slowing progress.
- Work on the Welcome All contract with SC and CCS (now Thrive) has been complicated and reliant on partners who work at different paces with multiple reporting mechanisms.
- Support for Broadway Community Garden has been impacted by complexities within group dynamics and transitioning purpose (from campaigning group to managing a garden).
- Aligning team capacity with external and emerging projects.

Climate Emergency & Resilience

Author: Matt Mellen, Climate Action Lead

Highlights

- **ENGAGEMENT** – a new partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust led to a very well attended climate adaptation workshop being held at the Cheese and Grain in May. 130 people took part. Since then there have been two rounds of community engagement and an online survey is [open for input](#). A follow-up event is being planned for October. A new climate action plan / strategy is being prepared. Two home energy events and a solar-for-business event have also happened. A new Climate Action WhatsApp Group is working. We are looking at other options for online organising around climate.
- **ENERGY** - GHF budget underspend was repurposed to hire a freelance renewable energy coordinator. For six months this was Linnea Hopkins. She has now left and been replaced by William Reynolds. Both are FRECo board members and volunteer Energy Champions. A new solar energy project that implements the work programme has been launched – [Solar and Beyond](#). A successful bid has been submitted to the Rural England Prosperity Fund for new solar panels and batteries on the Cheese and Grain. A bid has been submitted to The Community Energy Fund for a feasibility study for a wind turbine for Frome.
- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** - GHF budget underspend was repurposed to add 3 days to Caroline Wajsblum's working week to focus on helping Frome homes to become more sustainable by acting on their retrofit assessment reports. About 150 homes have been assessed and almost a third of these have now benefitted from a home visit. Our aim is to support their next steps with information, introductions to contractors and support.
- **ACTIVE TRAVEL** - GHF budget underspend was repurposed to expand Frome Community Bike Project's offer. We are currently recruiting for a part time / freelance assistant for Emma. We have successfully secured a new piece of land by the station for a new FCBP bike shed that will house a new e cargo bike. A successful grant was secured from GWR to link the station with the centre of town. We are looking into

creating a matching bike shed (both with solar panels on the roof) to go outside the library so that ebikes can be used to shuttle between the station and the centre of town and charged at either end.

Sticking points

- New work has depended heavily on GHF budget underspend. To continue this work post March 2026 new resources may need to be found. Matt is increasingly looking at new funding options.
- It remains challenging to get through to the right people on the trading estates to unlock the energy generating potential of putting solar panels on many of these big roofs. In many cases the businesses in the buildings do not own the buildings. The landlords are remote, hard to get in touch with and often not interested. Any introductions to key people who can help move things along appreciated.
- Conversations around how best to facilitate the launch of a reuse centre for Frome continue. Barriers remain funding, a suitable location and the team to run it. The next step may be for FTC to put a feasibility study out to tender. The brief is in development.

Marketing & Communications

Author: Rachel Griffin, Marketing and Communications Manager

Included in a verbal Marketing and Communications verbal update

Town Centre

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

Highlights

- Catherine Street Car Park Bin Store and Planter, to be installed imminently
- Working with Maybrook (owners of Westway Shopping Centre) other landlords, and retailers to find a mutually beneficial commercial waste storage solution for Scott Road
- Working with stakeholders of Cheap Street to improve vibrancy and appearance of the area
- Discover Frome launched
- And the first of a series of meetings with the venues delivered and both the site and the meeting really well received. We will deliver these quarterly to support collaboration between venues.

Sticking points

- In collaboration with town centre lead we have agreed to stop funding the footfall data. Examination of the figures revealed that it was capturing cars, rendering it meaningless. There was a significant outlay involved in potentially moving it, which was judged not to be worth it. To replace this work we will produce some metrics using more traditional methods.
- Palmer Street Closure plans have come to a halt awaiting on engagement with licensing

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

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
Research and understand the impacts of climate and ecological breakdown on Frome, what initiatives have been successful to date and how we can encourage behaviour and system change.	
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 organisations working in climate action in Frome to access grants and other sources of funding. Develop a scheme to provide grant funding for community action building on the new town-wide climate action plan.	
Develop and implement a communications plan that encourages individuals and organisations to make changes	
Objective: ENERGY - Enable the scaling up of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy generation	
Project	Status
Engage the local community including those already working in this field to imagine how our neighbourhoods might be retrofitted and adapted and the EPC rating of homes can be improved. Raise the profile of retro-fit	
Investigate the opportunities to install solar on public and commercial buildings in Frome at scale	
Frome Green Energy	
Objective: FOOD - Develop food resilience through a thriving local food network and an increase in the amount of food consumed in Frome that is grown in Frome	
Project	Status
Promote and support food resilience initiatives and strategies developed through the Frome Food Network and other organisations	
Objective: RAVEL AND TRANSPORT - Encourage greater take up of active travel and sustainable transport	
Project	Status
Encourage greater take up of active travel and sustainable transport.	
Objective: MATERIALS & WASTE - Develop a circular economy in Frome, reducing the amount of waste leaving Frome and encouraging reuse and recycling.	
Project	Status
Explore potential Re-use Centre. Promote and support circular economy initiatives developed through local community organisations	

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	