

Agenda item 7

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

- National play day at Edmund Park – localised offer targeting a peripheral neighbourhood with an inclusive offer without draining capacity of team.
- Lots of neighbourhood engagement – Adventures in your Neighbourhood, coffee mornings in the Mount, Caravan Arts at St Johns, community picnic at Egford Park, pop ups about trees in Weylands and Mendip Drive.
- Solid beginning to the test and learn year at Key Centre with burgeoning activity, facilities oversight and excellent co-ordination, partnership and resourcing.
- Mary Baily young people's co-design off to a slow and steady start (as planned), building clarity on infrastructure to enable considered engagement.
- Progress with Broadway Community Gardens and support for the community group to engage meaningfully with neighbours, including about local support for a fully funded compost toilet.
- Welcome All contract (for the Welcome Hub) now has clarity of roles and expectations of partners. Trip to Stonehenge enjoyed by a number of displaced people from Frome and lots of intensive support around families seeking asylum.
- Exciting beginning to the Young People's Participatory Grant Making pilot (Our Say, Our Way) with all four middle schools signed up for Year 8 students to take part in co-designing a grants programme (open Dec in line with FTC grants).
- Connect Somerset champion working with partners in Shepton Mallet to identify trends and gaps in service provision for CYP.
- First part of Funding Landscape/Frome Fund research complete and poised to take to working group for initial thoughts and next steps.
- First steps in Skatepark project undertaken with fundraiser brief published.
- Work being taken forward with Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion work to support project planning and fulfil statutory duties.
- Support for Volunteering for Health pilot, led by Spark – upcoming events bringing organisations to work on actionable projects to improve volunteering landscape.
- Onboarding with digital participatory platform (Go Vocal) about to start.

Sticking points

- Aligning team capacity with external and emerging projects.
- Complex safeguarding cases coming through the Welcome Hub.

Climate Emergency & Resilience

Author: Matt Mellen, Climate Action Lead

Highlights

- **ENGAGEMENT** – a new series of events has been scheduled to continue raising climate awareness and action. This will include a full day workshop with Rob Hopkins around creating a positive future vision for Frome. FTC's new climate action plan will be launched early in 2026 including a new adaptation plan. November 3rd is the GHF conference which will communicate learnings from the project to a national audience. Matt presented at the launch of Frome's new Property and Planning Network.
- **ENERGY** - William Reynolds has been making good progress as our part time, freelance renewable energy coordinator. Opportunities across our town are being explored. Discussions are ongoing with homes and businesses, and we continue to develop our relationship with FRECo and look for opportunities for the next big community owned installation. A new project pipeline document tracks this work. The Cheese and Grain is proceeding with an upgrade to its solar installation. Meetings are scheduled with the leisure centre. We are linking up with Somerset Council to look at a solar canopy for the Cheese and Grain car park. New sites have been identified for a wind turbine.
- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** - Energy Advice - Testing out CEE (Centre for Energy Equality) online training for the first time benefitting volunteers and staff at FTC and GHF partners. Home visits and energy advice sessions (at Frome Medical Practice and Pantry) ticking along as normal. Planning a talk for Keyring in October, a winter advice session at the Key Centre and schools' engagement starting in November with a Trinity School Energy Café. There is a new Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) case worker which will enable us to increase engagement with community groups and medical professionals.
- **Retrofit Support** - Working with CSE to reassess strategy and make our partnership more effective and efficient. About to do another push on comms for CSE Retrofit Assessments. Home visits and support going well, approx. 3 per month. 15 completed including thorough support reports. 9 people have not wanted further support (many have decided that retrofitting their home is too expensive). Tracking barriers: mostly financial, lack of trust in installers, aversion to upheaval, slow return on investment. Researching into solutions for these barriers, including other similar projects in other areas in UK. So far, 21% of retrofit measures recommended in initial reports have been completed, residents are working on another 22% of measures themselves and requesting support for a further 25% of measures. Residents have decided against 32% of recommended measures (due to the barriers mentioned above).
- **ACTIVE TRAVEL** – Freelance Cycle Together assistant started in August and is looking into a financially sustainable model to continue delivery beyond the end of GHF funding. Emma is considering options for self-service hire bikes and cargo bike to live at the new FCBP bike shed at Station Approach. There are three possible providers, all offering a slightly different model with various funding streams and options. New Cycle Together films being created using GHF budget, second one due to launch soon. GWR funding to celebrate 200 years of the railway will continue to build links with FCBP and the centre of town.

- **MATERIALS & REUSE** – a recent stakeholder meeting brought together those in the town working on a reuse centre. The challenge remains to secure the funding required, find a site and identify the core team to run the project.

Sticking points

- Our renewable energy and retrofit work are currently funded by GHF. We are exploring other ways of funding these workstreams from April 2026.
- There are many barriers to new renewable energy projects including funding and grid connectivity. We are having to be opportunistic and seize opportunities where they come up.

Marketing & Communications

Author: Rachel Griffin, Marketing and Communications Manager

Highlights

- Markets have now been successfully handed over to the Independent Market team for their day-to-day management. We remain in strategic discussions with them around marketing and branding, as well as future improvements. Conversations are now turning to marketing Frome as *The Market Town*, with the Market Forum — originally set up to support the transition with traders — being extended to cover other markets too. Stepping back from the day-to-day running has given us the space to provide proper support in these areas. Feedback from traders has been very positive, and the Independent Market is continuing initiatives we had begun to embed, such as Lunch Bunch, while also exploring new ways to attract customers and improve the overall market offer.
- The ‘Communicating with Us’ survey alongside a series of pop-up engagement events have now been completed, with outcomes presented elsewhere on this agenda.
- A number of branding exercises have taken place this summer. This includes new Key Centre signage, developed following engagement around the colour palette, and supported by new style guides and layouts. The branding of the young people’s participatory grant-making project has also been developed, ‘Our Say, Our Way’. In addition, work is underway on signage for the Bike Project and the new cargo bike parking shed.
- Events have been a strong feature this summer and summarised elsewhere on this agenda.
- In Mary Baily, the Mower Shed mural brief has been consulted on publicly, with artist Jody Thomas now appointed. Work is due to begin this autumn.
- We have also been progressing work on the digital platform, with the proposal coming to council in August. Due diligence is nearly complete, and we are preparing to sign contracts with Go Vocal for the next phase.
- Our summer placements, Joe and Macy, proved to be a huge asset. They have produced films for Healthy Homes, the Walking Festival, Children’s Festival, You’re Welcome campaign, the Key Centre and Discover Frome, alongside collateral for all the autumn events. Eloise has joined us now to support the first phase of the bus map project. This will ensure all bus stops have permissions for the integrated bus maps.

Sticking points

- The panel have failed to come to a definitive decision about Discover Frome Map brief – we are putting an extension of the process in place to enable us more time to come to a decision

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 is progressing well
- Working with stakeholders of Cheap Street to improve vibrancy and appearance of the area
- There has been a big marketing push for the Discover Frome Website and work has now turned to working with partners, businesses and cultural organisations to ensure they know how Discover Frome can support their business.
- We have begun to work with businesses to collect accessibility information to enable Discover Frome to feature this element on the website

Sticking points

- Palmer Street Road Closure plans are struggling due to lack of engagement with both the business owners and licensing. This is on hold now until January due to capacity
- There has been some disquiet over misinformation around perceived plans around both the Palmer Street Road closure and the loss of car parking space at the top of Catherine Hill. To address this we are bringing together business owners and residents in the area to hear views on how to remedy this.
- Market Yard toilets were closed on the 1 September to allow for engagement on whether to refurbish or repurpose the building. This has caused a hiatus whilst we get elements in place to begin to engage in this area
- The Discover Frome event scraper is not working as expected. Zonkey our website technical support are working on it!
- Town Centre Murals brief has been withdrawn due to misunderstanding around landlords' permissions - relationships have since been restored and we will continue to explore with landowners for ways to improve the Town centre
- The BT owned phone box on Scott Road isn't scheduled to be refurbished until the next financial year and so the refurbishment of FTC's neighbouring phone box has been put back until then to ensure cost effectiveness.

| 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 | |
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| 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 | |