

Minutes of a meeting of the Community and Place Committee

Wednesday 6 August 2025, 7pm  
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

**Present:**

In the Town Hall: Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Carla Collenette, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Andy Jones, Lisa Merryweather

**Online:**

Tracey Ashford

**In attendance:**

Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Hannah Stopford (Engagement Lead), Lucy McMahon (Marketing and Communications Lead), Amber Stone (Marketing and Tourism Assistant), Nykki Mehta (Events Administrator), Miles Macey (Marketing and Communications Assistant), Joe Malley (Support Steward)

1 member of the public was in attendance at Frome Town Hall

0 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWal\\_hFbzuO&t=1856s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWal_hFbzuO&t=1856s)

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2025/06/CP	<p><b>1a. Apologies for absence</b> Andy Jones proposed to accept apologies from Anita Collier, Anne Hills, Steve Tanner and from Tracey Ashford who attended online seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p> <p><b>1b. Declaration of members' interests</b> None was received.</p> <p><b>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 11 June 2025</b> The minutes of the Community and Place Committee meeting held on 11 June 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Fiona Barrows, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2025/07/CP	<p><b>2. Questions from public and Cllrs</b> Concerns were raised by Andy Jones regarding banners on railings and roundabouts. Nick Dove noted that Ranger Mike had been removing banners in the town centre. Fiona Barrows was concerned about staff time if removal extended to the whole town. Lisa Merryweather suggested raising public awareness via</p>	

	<p>Frome Times and Andy agreed to ask the Mayor to include this in her weekly column in the Frome Times. She also suggested that businesses could be directed to the Discover Frome website as a place to advertise. Peter Wheelhouse noted that Town Centre Coordinator, Katie Fraser would address the issue and would look into a solution.</p>	<p><b>AJ</b></p> <p><b>KF</b></p>
2025/08/CP	<p><b>3. For information - Update on Marketing and Communications work programme</b></p> <p>Amber Stone presented the newly relaunched Discover Frome website. Key improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A cleaner, more user-friendly interface with a “mega menu” for intuitive navigation.</li> <li>• Improved search tool.</li> <li>• Users can save events and listings, view them on a map, and share personalised itineraries with others.</li> <li>• Event uploads are semi-automated, significantly reducing admin time for staff. Businesses and event organisers can submit listings directly, which are moderated before publication to ensure quality and appropriateness.</li> </ul> <p>Lucy McMahon provided insights into how metrics were being tracked. She explained monthly reports were compiled using AI tools to analyse performance across platforms. Also plans were in place to share relevant statistics with local businesses via mailing lists and meetings.</p> <p>Lucy noted Facebook remained the strongest platform with over 7,000 followers and high engagement. Instagram (FTC and Discover Frome) has nearly 7,000 combined followers. Testing showed images performed as well as video, allowing for a more efficient content strategy. FTC focus was on collaborative posts and reels rather than frequent new posts.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the use of AI and the possible introduction of a policy considering ethical and environmental impacts. Cllrs discussed extending AI training to community members and businesses, leveraging free resources like Apolitical.</p> <p>Lucy explained the “Communicating With Us” survey was underway. Early findings showed strong interest in face-to-face engagement and WhatsApp communities. The insights would inform future communications strategy and digital platform development.</p>	
2025/09/CP	<b>4. For decision - Marketing and Communications Events</b>	

	<p>Rachel Griffin gave a summary of new events that had been added to the calendar which included The Canteen in the Park, Frome Pride Parade, Balancing the Scales film screening and Pancake Race.</p> <p>Rachel then explained that FTC had received requests to use noticeboards and open spaces for humanitarian fundraising events by Frome Friends of Palestine. It was noted that the current media and PR policy prohibited political publicity, in line with the Local Government Act 1986. There was a detailed discussion and debate around the distinction between humanitarian and political messaging. Comparisons were made to previous support for Ukraine-related events and concerns were raised about consistency, inclusivity, and the potential for perceived bias. It was agreed for Rachel to draft a position statement to clarify FTC's stance and ensure consistent application of policy, this would then be brought to Council for wider discussion and approval.</p> <p>Finally Rachel explained that Christmas event had been flagged by the police as a "place of overcrowding." With the upcoming Martyn's Law there would be a requirement for event organisers to implement enhanced safety measures, including Hostile Vehicle Mitigation. Rachel presented some of the options available and the costs such as permanent bollards or gates or temporary barriers (e.g. hired HVM units). There was a discussion about the cost and necessity of such measures and the importance of public safety and compliance with future legislation. It was agreed for Rachel to prepare a formal paper with costed options and a timeline for implementation before the Lantern Parade in November.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the changes to upcoming events in the table (changes in purple)</li> <li>2. Agree the additions and changes to the programme of events as set out above for the upcoming year</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather left the meeting at 7.59pm.</p>	<p>RG</p> <p>RG</p>
2025/10/CP	<p>5. For discussion – A digital engagement platform for Frome</p> <p>Fiona Barrows summarised the report and explained the aim was to introduce a dedicated digital engagement platform to enhance community participation in local decision making. The proposal was in response to the findings from the Picture of Frome</p>	

	<p>research, which highlighted low levels of civic engagement and a desire for more accessible ways to contribute. The platform would complement, not replace, face-to-face engagement and existing communication channels.</p> <p>Miles Macey outlined the core functionality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys, idea sharing, open discussions, interactive mapping, voting, participatory budgeting, and working group creation.</li> <li>• Project timelines, updates, and outcomes would be visible in one place.</li> <li>• The platform would be branded with FTC identity and sit alongside the main website.</li> <li>• It would support ward based engagement, open space consultations, and community-led initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>Miles outlined the benefits which included a centralised engagement hub, transparency and accountability, enabling residents to initiate and lead projects independently, flexibility, data integration and support for working groups.</p> <p>The challenges and considerations included cost which was estimated between £10,000–£19,000 per year. A 30% discount was offered for the first year (£10,500), staff time for the initial setup and ongoing moderation required commitment, the requirement for a strong communications campaign to encourage residents to signup, a risk of excluding those without internet access or digital confidence and of residents expecting action on issues beyond FTC’s remit.</p> <p>Cllrs were supportive of the concept, especially for localised engagement. Nick Dove and Andy Jones were cautious about staff capacity and the need for clear project planning. All Cllrs agreed there should be an emphasis on transparency, inclusivity, and ensuring the platform adds value. They felt the platform could help address gaps in current engagement, especially for those not reached through traditional methods.</p> <p>A recommendation would be brought for decision to a future Council meeting.</p>	RG
2025/11/CP	<p><b>6. For information – Review of the Community Engagement &amp; Development, Climate Emergency &amp; Resilience, Marketing &amp; Communications and Town Centre work programmes</b></p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows said that she found the format of the report helpful and informative and it gave her an understanding of where the teams were at in delivering the work programme.</p>	

2025/12/CP	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 1 October 2025, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	
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The chair closed the meeting at: 8.57pm

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