

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 10 December 2025, 6pm  
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

**Present:**

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Fiona Barrows (Chair), Sara Butler, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Andy Jones, Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather, Steve Tanner

**In attendance:**

Martin Starnes (BHL), David Parry (BHL), Peter Wheelhouse (Acting Town Clerk), Jane Llewellyn (Acting Deputy Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager & RFO), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer, online), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

15 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall  
37 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2025/75/FC	<p>The meeting started at 6pm.</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Anita Collier proposed to accept apologies from Anne Hills, seconded by Tracy Ashford, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests All Cllrs had a registrable interest due to their roles in FTC and declared an interest.</p> <p>Dispensations to enable Cllrs to participate and vote were proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>(See signed declarations on page 4)</p>	
2025/76/FC	<p>2. Questions from public and Cllrs None was received.</p>	
2025/77/FC	<p>3. For decision – whether to revoke the decision to exclusively enable Badgers Hill Limited to take on a full repairing lease of Badgers Hill Stadium (with an option to buy)</p> <p>Fiona Barrows summarised the report and outlined the background of the situation, noting that the Council had intervened to save the stadium from repossession in 2022, paying off debts of £340,000 and later acquiring the freehold. Significant grant funding had followed, including £350,000 to the</p>	

	<p>Community Benefit Society (CBS) and £150,000 to Frome Town Football Club for repairs and improvements. Despite this, the project remained unfinished, with outstanding works on the boiler and changing rooms.</p> <p>In July, the Council agreed to a tenancy at will with Badgers Hill Limited (BHL) at a rent of £32,000 per annum, on favourable terms, pending a full repairing lease. However, since September, progress had stalled. BHL had not confirmed readiness to proceed, citing a valuation discrepancy and requesting rent waivers and FTC's investment in boiler repairs without providing a business case or financial transparency. Health and safety concerns had escalated, with risk assessments commissioned by FTC identifying serious issues including legionella risk, fire safety deficiencies, and electrical hazards.</p> <p>The Acting Town Clerk, Peter Wheelhouse, and Acting Deputy Town Clerk, Jane, detailed these findings, stressing BHL's legal obligations under the Occupiers' Liability Act and the urgency of remedial action. Jane emphasised that neglecting health and safety could result in severe consequences, including unlimited fines and reputational damage should an incident occur.</p> <p>Martin Starnes and David Parry addressed the Council on behalf of BHL and Frome Town Football Club. Martin acknowledged FTC's frustration and confirmed his commitment to resolving safety issues and developing a sustainable plan. He cited his extensive experience in football and stadium management and requested an extension of exclusivity until the end of January to allow submission of a business plan.</p> <p>David Parry confirmed that electricians had already begun work on urgent issues and that public liability insurance was being arranged. He noted that volunteers were managing the site and that external health and safety expertise would be sought. Both representatives stressed their desire to maintain the clubhouse as a community asset and outlined plans for future events and engagement.</p> <p>Cllrs raised concerns about unpaid rent, lack of progress since July, and the absence of a detailed business plan. Anita Collier asked whether BHL would close the clubhouse if deemed unsafe; Martin replied that current risks were limited but acknowledged the need for improvements.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather highlighted FTC's duty to 28,000 residents and questioned whether it was prudent to rely on a single option for</p>	
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	<p>the stadium’s future. She stressed that opening the process to other proposals was essential.</p> <p>Polly Lamb expressed disappointment that assurances sought in the published report had not been addressed in detail. Tracy Ashford noted the importance of hope but voiced concern over previous breaches of contract terms.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows reiterated that revoking exclusivity did not preclude BHL from submitting a proposal and that all options would be considered in March 2026.</p> <p>Members of the public spoke in support of granting BHL additional time, citing Martin Starnes’ experience and the importance of maintaining football in Frome. Others raised questions about transparency of accounts and community benefit.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To revoke the decision taken at Council on 2 July to exclusively enable Badgers Hill Ltd (BHL) to take on a full repairing lease of Badgers Hill Stadium with an option to buy</li> </ol> <p>Proposed by Lisa Merryweather, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed by majority. Tracey Ashford, Sara Butler, Anita Collier abstained.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Steve Tanner proposed to amend recommendation 2:</li> </ol> <p>That delegated authority is granted to the Acting Town Clerk in consultation with Cllr Fiona Barrows (Leader of the Council) and Cllr Steve Tanner (Lead Councillor for Assets) for all future decisions regarding health and safety of the site</p> <p>Seconded by Anita Collier, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather was against.</p>	
2025/78/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 14 January 2026, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 7.38pm

Dispensation request for Cllr

Name of meeting: Extraordinary meeting of Frome Town Council

Date of meeting: 10 December 2025

Agenda Item: 3

Description and nature of interest disclosed:

Member of:	Pecuniary (please tick)	Other registrable (please tick)
Frome CBS		
FTAFC		
Frome Town Council	*	✓
Purple Elephant		
Fair Frome		
Frome Town Supporters Club		
Other – please state		

This dispensation is required to participate in the discussion and vote

The dispensation is sought to enable meeting to be quorate.

Signed *Anita Collier*

Cllr ..... ANITA COLLIER

Dispensation request for Cllr

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Cllr .....

ASHFORD

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*Lisa Merryweather*

Cllr ... LISA MERRYWEATHER

Dispensation request for Cllr **POLLY LAMB** .

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Cllr ..... **POLLY LAMB** .

Dispensation request for Cllr *Sara Butler*

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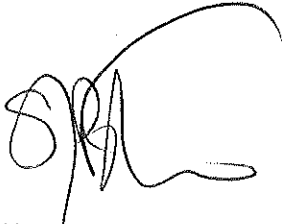
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Cllr .....

Dispensation request for Cllr **MARK DORRINGTON**

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*Mark Dorington*

Cllr .....

10<sup>12</sup>/25

Dispensation request for Cllr **S. TANNER**

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Cllr ..... **S. TANNER**      10/12/25

Dispensation request for Cllr *Andy Jones*

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Signed *Andy Jones*

Cllr ..... *ANDY JONES*

Dispensation request for Cllr *GOVA DARROW*

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Cllr *GOVA DARROW*

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