

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 27 May 2026, 6.30pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Sara Butler (Chair), Philip Campagna, Mark Dorrington, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Lyndsey Mayhew, Lisa Merryweather, Richard Pinnock, Ben Still, Steve Tanner, Andy Wrintmore

On Zoom: Fiona Barrows and Nick Dove

In attendance:

Cllr Adam Boyden (SC Cllr), Peter Wheelhouse (Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager & RFO), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Emma Parker (Community Project Officer), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer, online), Sian James (Business and HR Administrator)

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

2 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2026/41/FC	<p>The meeting started at 6.30pm.</p> <p>1. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair of Council Andy Jones proposed Fiona Barrows as Chair of Council, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Fiona thanked Cllrs for their support, noting that she was currently undergoing cancer treatment and was therefore attending remotely. She spoke of her determination to make the most of the final year of the current administration and to complete key priorities, expressing optimism about the work underway.</p> <p>Steve Tanner proposed Mark Dorrington as Deputy Chair of Council, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed by majority. Mark Dorrington abstained.</p>	
2026/42/FC	<p>2. To waive standing orders to enable a Cllr other than the Chair or Deputy Chair to chair this meeting To allow a Cllr other than the Chair or Deputy Chair to preside, Andy Jones proposed the waiver of standing orders, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2026/43/FC	<p>3. Election of chair Anne Hills proposed Sara Butler as Chair of the meeting, seconded</p>	

	<p>by Lyndsey Mayhew, agreed unanimously. Sara then assumed the chair.</p>	
<p>2026/44/FC</p>	<p>4a. Apologies for absence Steve Tanner proposed to accept apologies from Carla Collette, and Anita Collier, and from Fiona Barrows and Nick Dove who attended online, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>4b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>4c. Approval of minutes from the last meeting on 22 April 2026 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 April 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously. Lisa Merryweather abstained.</p>	
<p>2026/45/FC</p>	<p>5. Questions from public and Cllrs A member of the public, Julia Gray, raised concerns regarding the Council's ongoing management structure review, questioning whether a relatively modest external consultancy commission would adequately address what they considered to be broader structural issues across staff, Cllrs and governance arrangements. They also suggested that FTC risked becoming insular and insufficiently representative, citing overlapping committee memberships and recommending limits on Cllr participation as well as greater use of co-opted members.</p> <p>In response, Fiona Barrows explained that the review followed the Local Government Association peer review and formed one element of a wider improvement programme. She emphasised the need to balance external scrutiny with value for money and internal knowledge. She noted that FTC had already made structural changes, including the introduction of new committees, and that advisory groups reported directly to Council rather than committees. Several Cllrs contributed to the discussion. Lisa Merryweather emphasised the opportunity to draw more actively on the skills and expertise available within the community and suggested expanding participatory approaches. Andy Jones highlighted that the number of Cllrs was determined nationally and that members were volunteers, noting the importance of balancing broad oversight with specialist focus. Lyndsey Mayhew added that while the Council's engagement activity was extensive, it might not always be visible to residents, giving the impression of an "echo chamber" when that was not the case.</p> <p>Julia reiterated the importance of co-opting residents into decision making roles rather than relying solely on attendance at meetings.</p>	

	<p>Fiona acknowledged the point and highlighted examples of existing collaborative and participatory work, including partnerships and the youth led grants programme, while recognising that further improvements could be made.</p> <p>Nick Dove raised a public safety concern regarding antisocial behaviour involving children accessing a rooftop in the town centre and throwing objects. He requested that FTC identify the responsible landowner or housing association. Officers confirmed they would investigate.</p>	
<p>2026/46/FC</p>	<p>6. For decision - Adoption of Standing Orders and the Cllr Code of Conduct, and confirmation that FTC retains the General Power of Competence Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Standing Orders as amended at Appendix 6.1 2. Approve the Cllrs' Code of Conduct at Appendix 6.2 <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/47/FC</p>	<p>7. 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>The following Cllrs put themselves forward for the membership of the Community and Place Committee:</p> <p>Tracey Ashford Fiona Barrows Sara Butler Cara Collenette Anita Collier Mark Dorrington Nick Dove Anne Hills Andy Jones Lyndsey Mayhew - Chair Lisa Merryweather Steve Tanner</p> <p>The following Cllrs put themselves forward for the membership of the Operations and Assets Committee:</p> <p>Fiona Barrows Philip Campagna Mark Dorrington Anne Hills - Chair</p>	

	<p>Andy Jones Polly Lamb Richard Pinnock Steve Tanner</p> <p>The following Cllrs put themselves forward for the membership of the Planning Committee: Fiona Barrows Philip Campagna Mark Dorrington Andy Jones Polly Lamb Steve Tanner – Chair</p> <p>The following Cllrs put themselves forward for the membership of the Grants Committee: Tracey Ashford Philip Campagna - Chair Anne Hills Andy Jones Polly Lamb Lisa Merryweather Steve Tanner</p> <p>Anne Hills proposed to add Lisa Merryweather to the membership of the Grants Committee, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather abstained.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree proposals for membership of the Community and Place Committee 2. To agree proposals for the Chair of the Community and Place Committee 3. To agree proposals for membership of the Operation and Assets Committee 4. To agree proposals for the Chair of the Operation and Assets Committee 5. To agree proposals for membership of the Planning Committee 6. To agree proposals for the Chair of the Planning Committee 7. To agree proposals for membership of the Grants Committee 8. To agree proposals for the Chair of the Grants Committee <p>Proposed by Lyndsey Mayhew, seconded by Ben Still, agreed unanimously.</p>			
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="405 1951 906 2018">Work programme area</td> <td data-bbox="906 1951 1286 2018">Lead Cllr</td> </tr> </table>	Work programme area	Lead Cllr	
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2026/48/FC	<p>The recommendation was to appoint the Lead Cllrs as described in the report above.</p> <p>Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>8. For decision - Approval of CCTV Service Level Agreement with Somerset Council</p> <p>Rob Holden presented a summary of the report. He explained that FTC now owned the CCTV cameras following devolution arrangements and paid for monitoring services at a standard rate per camera. The new agreement would run from April 2027 to March 2030, with costs increasing in line with inflation.</p> <p>Rob outlined the operational benefits of CCTV, including evidential use and real time coordination with police. Recent examples were provided, including a rapid response to graffiti and a potentially serious public safety incident.</p> <p>The discussion that followed was extensive. Nick Dove expressed concern that the cost of CCTV had effectively been transferred to town councils despite its primary use by police and questioned the value of the current model. Lisa Merryweather raised detailed concerns about value for money, citing research suggesting that CCTV did not significantly reduce crime rates and highlighting that most crime in Frome occurred outside the town centre. She questioned whether resources might be better targeted elsewhere. Philip Campagna queried whether the number and placement of cameras reflected changing patterns of activity and asked what control FTC had. It was confirmed that FTC could relocate or add cameras, subject to funding.</p>																			

	<p>Further discussion considered whether CCTV served as a deterrent, its role in public reassurance, and the limitations of available data. Fiona Barrows acknowledged discomfort with the funding model but explained that without agreement the service would cease. She proposed that FTC approve the agreement for now while seeking to exert greater influence and review its effectiveness.</p> <p>A member of the public questioned the timing of committing to a three-year agreement ahead of a potential change in administration. Officers confirmed that while the agreement would be in place, FTC retained the ability to switch off cameras if required.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the SC CCTV Service Level Agreement (CCTV, Management and Maintenance Obligations) for Frome’s 10 public town centre CCTVs to run from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2030 at an initial annual cost of £27,980 (£2,798 per camera x10), plus additional cost for repairs, funded from 600-7987. Costs rising thereafter in line with inflation.</p> <p>Proposed by Lyndsey Mayhew, seconded by Andy Wrintmore, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather was against.</p>	
<p>2026/49/FC</p>	<p>9a. For decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year End Financial reports to 31 March 2026 General Reserves and proposed Earmarked Reserves at 1/4/26 Approve the Internal Audit & controls Year End Actions prior to AGAR signing Approve the Bank mandate changes Review the Internal Auditors reports Approve the IT & AI Policy 2026 Approve the list of Disposals at 31 March 2026 Approve the Financial Regulations 2026 Approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 <p>Sarah Williams presented the year end financial position. It was reported that FTC had achieved a positive outturn, largely due to savings on staffing and increased income from interest. Reserves had been rebalanced, with earmarked reserves reduced and general reserves increased.</p> <p>A proposal was made to increase the prudent general reserve to the equivalent of three months’ operating costs, in line with national guidance. Sarah explained that this would strengthen financial resilience and support future planning.</p>	

	<p>Cllrs asked questions regarding audit recommendations and specific accounting arrangements, including the treatment of certain assets. Officers confirmed that advice had been sought and no barriers had been identified.</p> <p>The Council approved a range of financial governance items, including internal controls, appointment of the internal auditor, and updates to policies.</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement was then considered in detail. Cllrs confirmed compliance across all areas except one relating to the timing of publication of audit information, which had been delayed in the previous year. The statement was approved accordingly and signed.</p> <p>Anne Hills proposed additional recommendations at 5 and 5a to approve the reports of the internal auditor and the reappointment of the internal auditor for 26/27, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the recommendation to increase the minimum prudent level of General Reserve from its current £350k to three months operating costs, calculated at May 2026 to be circa £678k, and then to review annually. 2. Full Council to ratify approval of the Internal Controls of the Council and the risk register. 3. To approve the bank signatories and to note the table of bank accounts in <u>Appendix 9.5</u> Year Actions paper 4. Appointment of Peter Wheelhouse to the bank mandates for: CCLA and Mendip Credit Union 5. Approve the reports of the Internal Auditor for 2025/26 5.a. Approve the reappointment of Kevin Rose, IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd as our internal auditor for 2026/27 <p>Proposed by Lyndsey Mayhew, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/50/FC</p>	<p>9b. For decision:</p> <p>Year End Financial reports to 31 March 2026</p> <p>General Reserves and proposed Earmarked Reserves at 1/4/26</p> <p>Approve the Internal Audit & controls</p> <p>Year End Actions prior to AGAR signing</p> <p>Approve the Bank mandate changes</p> <p>Review the Internal Auditors reports</p> <p>Approve the IT & AI Policy 2026</p> <p>Approve the list of Disposals at 31 March 2026</p> <p>Approve the Financial Regulations 2026</p>	

	<p>Approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Approve the temporary recruitment of an additional two day a week Finance Officer level staff member for 3 months to assist the Business & Finance team to complete their tasks to be funded from the General Reserve 7. Approve the IT & AI policy for 2026 8. Approve the Disposals list at 31 March 2026. 9. Approve the Investment Policy in Appendix 9.10 for inclusion in the Financial Regulations 2026 10. Approve the current Financial Regulations for use in 2026/27 with no amendments. <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/51/FC</p>	<p>9c. For decision: Year End Financial reports to 31 March 2026 General Reserves and proposed Earmarked Reserves at 1/4/26 Approve the Internal Audit & controls Year End Actions prior to AGAR signing Approve the Bank mandate changes Review the Internal Auditors reports Approve the IT & AI Policy 2026 Approve the list of Disposals at 31 March 2026 Approve the Financial Regulations 2026 Approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26</p> <p>11. Instruct the Chair and the Clerk to sign on Cllrs' behalf that they agree all the governance statements in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and for it to be recorded as a minute reference.</p> <p>Proposed by Andy Wrintmore, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/52/FC</p>	<p>9d. For decision: Year End Financial reports to 31 March 2026 General Reserves and proposed Earmarked Reserves at 1/4/26 Approve the Internal Audit & controls Year End Actions prior to AGAR signing Approve the Bank mandate changes Review the Internal Auditors reports Approve the IT & AI Policy 2026 Approve the list of Disposals at 31 March 2026</p>	

	<p>Approve the Financial Regulations 2026 Approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Note that the Responsible Finance Officer has certified that the accounting statements fairly represent the financial position of Frome Town Council. 13. Instruct the Chair to sign on Cllrs' behalf that they have approved the accounting statements. (2. and 3. to be recorded as separate minute references) <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/53/FC</p>	<p>9e. For decision: Year End Financial reports to 31 March 2026 General Reserves and proposed Earmarked Reserves at 1/4/26 Approve the Internal Audit & controls Year End Actions prior to AGAR signing Approve the Bank mandate changes Review the Internal Auditors reports Approve the IT & AI Policy 2026 Approve the list of Disposals at 31 March 2026 Approve the Financial Regulations 2026 Approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Approve the exercise of public rights dates for 2026 15. Approve the revised Earmarked Reserves 31/03/26 for the start of the financial year 16. Note the amount in the General Reserve at the start of the financial year 17. Approve the payments over £100 published on the website and over £500 circulated with this report. <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/54/FC</p>	<p>10. For decision – Agree that Cycle Together ebikes can be loaned to Frome Community Bike Project to offer as hire ebikes</p> <p>Cllrs welcomed the initiative but raised concerns about affordability and accessibility. Lisa Merryweather questioned whether the proposed daily hire cost would exclude lower-income residents, noting the original intention of the project to support inclusive transport. Similar concerns were echoed by Fiona</p>	

	<p>Barrows and Nick Dove, who highlighted that the proposed pricing might be prohibitive.</p> <p>Emma Parker explained that the project now needed to cover its own costs following the end of grant funding, including maintenance and storage. However, she acknowledged the concerns and agreed to explore reduced or subsidised pricing options.</p> <p>Further discussion explored the challenges of sustaining the scheme without funding, storage limitations, and lessons from previous arrangements with local partners.</p> <p>Cllrs expressed general support for the proposal while recognising the need to ensure inclusivity and value for money.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FTC agrees to loan 10 ebikes, 10 bike locks, 10 helmets and 10 panniers to FCBP at no charge to FCBP for this loan. 2. FTC will take back 3 ebikes for staff use. 3. The remaining 4 ebikes will be disposed of by FTC and FCBP will be permitted to use them as they wish (spares/repairs/resale). <p>Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Richard Pinnock, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather abstained.</p>	
<p>2026/55/FC</p>	<p>11. For decision - Frome weekly markets – proposed creation of a Market Coordinator post</p> <p>Rachel Griffin provided an update on the operation of the weekly markets, noting their continued importance to the town centre in supporting footfall, local businesses and community activity. It was reported that work was ongoing to maintain a balanced mix of traders and to ensure the markets remained attractive and sustainable.</p> <p>Cllrs welcomed the update and recognised the positive contribution of the markets to Frome’s identity and economic vitality. They noted the importance of keeping the markets under review so that they remained responsive to changing retail conditions, seasonal variation and the needs of both traders and residents.</p> <p>It was also acknowledged that the markets formed part of a wider approach to supporting the town centre, and that continued attention should be given to accessibility, inclusivity and the range of goods on offer.</p>	

	<p>Anne Hills proposed to reduce the performance review from 12 to 9 months, seconded by Sara Butler, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move away from the third-party operator model 2. Recruit a dedicated Market Coordinator on a 1 year fixed term contract at 4 days per week (Option 1) 3. Establish a Market Forum to support collaboration and transparency 4. Review performance after 9 months against agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) <p>Proposed by Philip Campagna, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/56/FC</p>	<p>12. A verbal update on the Market Yard toilets lease</p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse reported that positive progress has been made in negotiations with Somerset Council regarding the Market Yard toilet lease in that they had now agreed that should FTC draw down a PWLB loan to finance improvements, their break clause would be removed. On the back of this, a date was now being sought for the first Frome Riverside Advisory Group to take this project forward.</p> <p>However, Sarah Williams noted that a draft of the lease was still awaited and Adam Boyden was asked to press SC to send a draft. He agreed.</p>	
<p>2026/57/FC</p>	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 10 June 2026, at the Key Centre and on Zoom</p>	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.21pm