

Minutes of a meeting of the Community and Place Committee

Wednesday 22 July 2026, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Sara Butler, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Lyndsey Mayhew (Chair), Steve Tanner

On Zoom: Fiona Barrows

In attendance:

Karen Bowlas (Development Manager (Volunteering for Health), SPARK), Philip Campagna (FTC Cllr), Andy Wrintmore (FTC Cllr), Peter Wheelhouse (Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning & Development Manager), Matt Mellen (Climate Action Lead), Laura Flaherty (HR Lead and Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk), Sian James (Business & HR Administrator)

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

0 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom

To watch the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGVsMZuIQ2o&t=62o6sN

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2026/21/CP	The meeting started at 7.02pm 1a. Apologies for absence Anita Collier proposed to accept apologies from Tracey Ashford, Lisa Merryweather and Ben Still and from Fiona Barrows who attended online, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously. 1b. Declaration of members' interests Lyndsey Mayhew declared a registrable interest in item 3. 1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 6 May 2026 The minutes of the Community and Place Committee meeting held on 6 May 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair. Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.	
2026/22/CP	2. Questions from public and Cllrs Lenka Grimes, representing the Frome Anti-Racist Communities Group (ARC), provided an update on the group's recent activities. Cllrs amongst others had previously been invited to anti-racism	

	training sessions organised by ARC in partnership with SARI, with support from Emily Osler, at Frome Town Council. Approximately 25 attendees from a range of organisations and community groups had participated in the first session, including representatives from local businesses, healthcare providers, sports clubs, community venues and public facing organisations. The training was reported to have been well attended and positively received, with significant interest expressed in future involvement. A second empowerment-focused session had enabled ARC members and residents with lived experience of racism to share their experiences in a supportive environment. Lenka explained that many members of the group, together with their families, had experienced racism locally, and that the session had provided valuable insight into these experiences. The group thanked the Mayor for the award of a £300 Mayor's Grant, which had supported their activities. Lenka explained that ARC was planning a schools based programme in partnership with local organisations, with six schools already signed up to participate in training during the autumn term. The aim of the programme is to support schools, staff, and young people in addressing and responding to racism. Lenka reported that SARI had praised the recent training sessions and highlighted them as an example of effective collaboration between a community led organisation, a local authority and partner agencies. ARC requested support from FTC, specifically asking FTC to consider formally adopting the group's anti-racism charter and helping to promote the charter through FTC communications channels. Lenka explained that the intention was for the charter and associated promotional materials to be displayed prominently in public venues and online, in a similar way to FTC's support for the White Ribbon campaign. Peter Wheelhouse advised that a proposal regarding adoption of the charter could be brought before a future meeting of the Council, subject to further details being submitted by the group. Cllr Fiona Barrows welcomed the work being undertaken by ARC, commending the commitment of volunteers who were giving their time and resources to the initiative. She noted that the group's objectives aligned closely with FTC's values and priorities and invited ARC to provide further information regarding the support sought. She suggested that some aspects of the request, particularly communications support, might be progressed outside	
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	of the meeting, while formal adoption of the charter would likely require Council approval.	
2026/23/CP	3. A short presentation about volunteering from Karen Bowlas Development Manager for Spark Somerset Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.13pm Karen Bolas, Development Manager for Spark Somerset, delivered a presentation on the Volunteering for Health programme. Karen explained that Spark Somerset had secured funding as one of fifteen organisations nationally selected to deliver the programme and that Frome had been chosen as one of two pilot locations in Somerset. The project was funded for two years and sought to strengthen local volunteering infrastructure and create conditions that enabled volunteering to thrive within health systems and communities. Karen outlined extensive engagement undertaken with local organisations to identify opportunities and barriers within the volunteering sector. Key themes included increasing youth volunteering, broadening participation, creating shared training opportunities, improving marketing and communications, and exploring volunteer passporting arrangements to enable volunteers to move more easily between organisations. Karen gave details of several grant funded projects. These included Fair Frome's youth volunteering pilot, Open Storytellers' work on barriers to volunteering for people with learning disabilities, Frome Birth Talk's development of a shared training package, The Good Heart's volunteer brokerage programme, Cultivating Community's work supporting volunteering among disabled and neurodiverse people, Field to Fork's youth engagement initiative and the Community Bike Project's volunteer development work. Karen explained how each project sought to address specific barriers and strengthen the local volunteering ecosystem. Karen also described work undertaken to improve the promotion of volunteering opportunities, including the development of localised online volunteering information and face to face brokerage support. Further updates were given on additional NHS related funding opportunities, including initiatives around digital inclusion and nature prescribing. She also highlighted Spark Somerset's volunteer training resources, data and insight services, and wider support available to community organisations. Anne Hills asked how the Frome pilot compared with the programme in Wincanton. Karen explained that the two locations	

	had developed different priorities based on local needs and circumstances. Frome had focused mainly on volunteering infrastructure and collaboration, while Wincanton's programme had developed stronger direct links to NHS services. She explained that learning from both pilots would ultimately inform wider volunteering development across Somerset.	
2026/24/CP	4. For discussion - Review of graffiti situation in Frome Rachel Griffin explained that while graffiti and tagging were not unique to the town, they had become an increasingly visible issue affecting the appearance of public spaces and residents' perceptions of the town centre. Rachel emphasised that FTC did not own much of the infrastructure being targeted and did not possess enforcement powers. Nevertheless, considerable staff time was dedicated to managing the issue. She advised that approximately fifty working days each year, equivalent to around twenty percent of a full-time role, were spent maintaining bins, utility boxes and related infrastructure. Material costs were estimated at around £3,000 annually. Rachel explained that FTC had initially pursued a zero tolerance approach, removing tags as soon as they appeared. However, this had often encouraged repeat tagging and led to an unsustainable cycle of repainting. Consequently, FTC had moved towards a strategy of periodic "resets," particularly ahead of major events and after school holidays. Rachel stressed that responsibility for the problem extended beyond FTC and involved Somerset Council, utility companies, property owners, the police and the wider community. She also suggested exploring creative responses, including utility box art projects and public art initiatives. The discussion generated considerable engagement from Cllrs, residents and community representatives. Anita Collier asked for clarification regarding the distinction between tagging and graffiti. Rachel explained that tagging generally involved repeated signatures or identifying marks created by individuals or groups. Resident Paul Fine delivered a prepared statement. He argued that police enforcement alone was unlikely to solve the problem and suggested that frequent removal of tags could be counterproductive. Paul proposed a stronger community led response, drawing parallels with litter picking groups and encouraging residents to remove tags themselves where possible. He also shared an example of a local resident whose fence had been painted with artwork featuring eyes, which appeared to discourage vandalism and tagging. Paul suggested that artistic	

	interventions could provide a practical alternative to repeated cleaning and repainting. Andy Jones reflected on tagging as a social activity and described it as a form of competition in which individuals sought recognition by placing tags in prominent or difficult to reach locations. He suggested that the challenge lay in reducing the rewards associated with the activity. Local mural artist Tom spoke about his own background in graffiti culture and acknowledged having participated in tagging during his youth. He explained that tagging often represented a means of gaining recognition among peers and described it as a common entry point into more creative artistic practice. Tom supported the creation of public art projects and opportunities for young people to channel their creativity in positive directions. Sara Butler asked whether Tom would be prepared to work with local schools and young people. Tom confirmed that he regularly undertook educational work in schools and believed such engagement could provide positive alternatives to tagging. Peter Wheelhouse suggested linking Tom with Melody Hunter Evans, Children and Young People's Project Officer to explore opportunities within local schools. Fiona Barrows questioned whether a relatively small number of individuals might be responsible for a large proportion of the tagging visible across the town. Tom suggested that some of the more prominent tags may be associated with groups operating under a common identity rather than a single individual. Fiona reflected that repeated removal might itself become part of the challenge if taggers viewed the process as a game or competition. Philip Campagna, who in his own time removes graffiti around the town, offered a contrasting perspective. He described the significant amount of time he spends cleaning bus shelters and other public infrastructure and argued that visible action was essential. In his view, allowing graffiti and tagging to remain in place created the impression that no one was addressing the problem. Drawing on conversations with visitors to Frome, Philip argued that tagging damaged perceptions of the town and suggested that consistent, prompt removal remained an important part of any solution. He also provided detailed practical information about different types of tagging materials and the challenges involved in removing them safely and effectively. Cllrs and residents discussed whether community volunteers could be trained to support graffiti removal efforts. Rachel noted that there would be training, safety and liability considerations,	MHE
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	particularly given the range of materials and surfaces involved. However, she acknowledged interest from several Cllrs in exploring volunteer led approaches further. Steve Macarthur of the Cheese & Grain shared his organisation's experience. He explained that the Cheese & Grain had experienced a significant tagging problem approximately ten years previously. The organisation had invested heavily in a comprehensive clean up and then adopted a policy of removing tags almost immediately whenever they appeared. Steve reported that tagging activity subsequently reduced dramatically and had remained low for a number of years. He also noted that murals on the building had not attracted further tagging. Steve argued that prompt removal was an important deterrent and encouraged local businesses and institutions to take responsibility for maintaining their own properties. Additional contributions were made by residents Roger Hemsley and Mark Hood, both of whom supported public art initiatives and expressed interest in community involvement. Roger highlighted several highly visible locations where tagging was particularly prominent and asked about the effectiveness of reporting incidents. Rachel reiterated the importance of reporting graffiti to Avon and Somerset Police, explaining that intelligence and reporting data influenced future resource allocation and support for preventative initiatives. Mark Dorrington reported a recent incident in which he had personally witnessed tagging in progress and subsequently submitted a report to the police. Although enforcement action had not followed, he stressed the importance of recording incidents to ensure they formed part of the evidence base. Mark expressed interest in exploring a volunteer led initiative similar to local litter picking schemes and stated his ambition to strengthen civic pride and improve the appearance of the town during his mayoral year. Sara thanked all participants for an informed and constructive discussion and noted that work on the issue would continue. Rachel invited those wishing to remain involved in future discussions to leave their contact details.	
2026/25/CP	5. For decision - Communications Strategy Review Philip Campagna left the meeting at 8.23pm Rachel Griffin explained that FTC's role had evolved significantly in recent years and now encompassed large scale projects, events, markets, partnership working and extensive community engagement. The proposed communications strategy would	

	therefore seek to align communications activity with the current Council Plan and reflect the organisation's expanded role. Rachel emphasised that communication should not be viewed solely as the responsibility of communications staff. Every interaction between Cllrs, officers and residents contributed to public perception of FTC. Rachel proposed a collaborative workshop involving both staff and Cllrs as a starting point for the review of the communications strategy. Discussions would focus on organisational values, identity, priorities, key messages and how residents currently viewed FTC. Resident feedback gathered during previous engagement exercises would also inform the process. Cllr Andy Jones acknowledged that the strategy might only be in place for a relatively short period before the next elections but nevertheless supported the proposal as a useful foundation for future administrations. The recommendations were: 1. To begin work towards the new Communications Strategy and align it with the Council Plan 2. To deliver the staff/councillor workshop as laid out in this report 3. To note the timeframe laid out whilst acknowledging that this may change Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously.	
2026/26/CP	6. A verbal update on recent FTC organised events Rachel Griffin highlighted the considerable volume of activity delivered and supported by FTC in recent months and emphasised that many of the events were community led initiatives that had benefited from FTC assistance rather than being wholly Council run. Support had included communications, licensing, stewarding, road closures, practical event delivery and use of FTC resources. Rachel explained that the programme contributed directly to Council Plan objectives by bringing people into the town centre, supporting local businesses, animating public spaces and creating opportunities for residents to connect with one another. She also stressed the value of collaborative working and the FTC's role in enabling community groups to deliver successful projects. A short presentation featuring photographs from recent events was shown and warmly received by Cllrs.	

2026/27/CP	7. For information – Review of the Community Engagement & Development, Marketing & Communications, Climate Action and Town Centre work programmes Cllrs noted the report Matt Mellen, Climate Action Lead, presented an update. He reflected on recent extreme weather and highlighted data indicating record temperatures and heatwaves. Matt noted that such events reinforced the need for both climate mitigation and adaptation work. Matt outlined a series of recent engagement initiatives including the People’s Emergency Briefing at the Cheese & Grain, which attracted approximately 330 attendees, and the Wildlife Parade, which successfully engaged families and younger audiences in conversations about climate and nature. He reported that community engagement remained a key strand of FTC’s climate programme. Matt also explained that the Healthy Homes programme continued to provide energy advice, retrofit support and renewable energy guidance. Home visits, energy champion support, referral pathways and community outreach work were helping residents improve the energy efficiency of their homes while addressing issues relating to cost of living, health and wellbeing. Interest in solar energy remained strong, and discussions were taking place with both householders and businesses regarding future installations and community energy opportunities. Matt highlighted work on climate adaptation planning, funding bids and partnership development. Relationships with organisations such as the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Somerset Council, Frome Renewable Energy Co-op and Somerset Wildlife Trust remained important in securing resources and delivering future projects. Steve Macarthur raised the issue of rainwater harvesting and water resilience. Matt agreed that increased seasonal weather extremes made water management an increasingly important consideration. Rachel added that officers had already begun discussing opportunities for water storage and harvesting at FTC owned buildings and community facilities.	
2026/28/CP	Cllrs noted that the next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 21 October 2026, Frome Town Hall and Zoom. This date has subsequently been changed to Tuesday 27 October 2026	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.52pm

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