

Minutes of a meeting of the Community and Place Committee

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

**Present:**

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Sara Butler, Carla Collenette (Chair), Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Lyndsey Mayhew, Lisa Merryweather, Steve Tanner

**In attendance:**

Jean Boulton & Clare Hein (Frome Welcomes Refugees), Lenka Grimes & Beverley Goddard (Fair Frome), Dawn Denton (SC Cllr), Peter Wheelhouse (Acting Town Clerk), Laura Flaherty (HR Lead and Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk), Matt Mellen (Climate Action Lead), Hannah Stopford (Engagement Lead), Melody Hunter Evans (Children and Young People's Project Officer), Katie Fraser (Town Centre Coordinator), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

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=entdUOVogFw&t=7373s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=entdUOVogFw&t=7373s)

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2026/01/CP	<p>1. Presentation from Frome Welcomes Refugees</p> <p>Representatives Claire Hein and Jean Boulton delivered a comprehensive presentation on the origins, development, and current work of Frome Welcomes Refugees. Claire explained that the group was formed in early 2022 in response to the unfolding crisis in Ukraine and the arrival of Syrian families some years earlier. She emphasised that the group was not an elected or constituted body but operated with terms of reference and recognised links to FTC and Rotary. Claire outlined that 149 refugees and asylum seekers currently lived in Frome and nearby villages, originating from a variety of nations. She paid particular tribute to Iryna Ladyzhenska, Welcome Hub Advice Officer, whose lived experience and language skills had greatly enhanced the support available.</p> <p>Jean then explained the group's advocacy role, describing how they ensured funds were fairly distributed and worked collaboratively across Rotary, Fair Frome, and the Welcome Hub. She went on to introduce the request for FTC to consider becoming a Council of Sanctuary, explaining that this national network recognised local authorities that actively support people seeking sanctuary. She stated that the accreditation cost is minimal and could be covered by the group if necessary. Jean</p>	

	<p>stressed the symbolic importance of joining a national network and the practical benefits, including access to shared learning and potential funding opportunities.</p> <p>Cllrs expressed strong appreciation for the work of the group. Nick Dove asked about the accreditation process, and Jean confirmed it was straightforward and mainly required describing existing work. Anita Collier spoke about the wider symbolism of becoming a Council of Sanctuary at a time of rising racism and polarisation locally, comparing the gesture to FTC’s White Ribbon accreditation.</p> <p>Nick raised concerns about whether such accreditation might be perceived as virtue signalling. Jean noted Frome was already doing the work and that recognition simply validated what is already happening. Some Cllrs echoed this sentiment, arguing that celebration of compassionate action strengthens community cohesion; others acknowledged the importance of ensuring messaging clearly reflects the practical support being delivered.</p> <p>Tracey Ashford and Lenka Grimes spoke strongly in favour, noting that FTC was already taking action to address racism and that becoming a Council of Sanctuary would reinforce that commitment. Andy Jones noted that although he had some reservations about over saturating FTC’s portfolio of external accreditations, he looked forward to a fuller debate when the matter was brought formally to Council. Several Cllrs commented that Frome had a history of leadership despite its small size, and that working with a national network would allow Frome to share learning and influence others.</p> <p>Carla Collenette summarised that although no decision would be taken at this meeting, there was broad support for the proposal when it is brought to full Council.</p>	<p>PW</p>
<p>2026/02/CP</p>	<p><b>2a. Apologies for absence</b> Lyndsey Mayhew proposed to accept apologies from Fiona Barrows, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p> <p><b>2b. Declaration of members’ interests</b> Anne Hills declared an other registrable interest in item 4.</p> <p><b>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 1 October 2025</b> The minutes of the Community and Place Committee meeting held on 1 October 2025 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 by</p>	

	majority. Anita Collier abstained.	
2026/03/CP	<p><b>3. Questions from public and Cllrs</b>                      Nick Dove raised concerns brought to them by the Barrowman regarding deteriorating waste bins in St John’s Churchyard and Vicarage Street. Officers confirmed these were on a replacement list and would be followed up.</p>	
2026/04/CP	<p><b>4. A brief presentation from Fair Frome</b>                      Lenka delivered a presentation that covered the full scope of Fair Frome’s work, including food parcels, the community pantry, community garden, Food at Five, holiday lunches, furniture bank, baby basics, the assistance scheme, and homelessness support. She reported increasing complexity of need, significant rises in rough sleeping, and growing financial insecurity linked to high rents, changes to council tax reduction, and rising living costs.</p> <p>Cllrs thanked Fair Frome for their vital work but expressed sadness that such demand existed. Lisa Merryweather queried whether different demographics were now accessing support; Lenka confirmed a significant rise in working families unable to meet basic costs. Lisa also asked about the likely impact of a potential council tax increase. Both Lenka and trustee Beverly noted that many vulnerable residents had already been affected by shifts in the Somerset Council (SC) tax reduction scheme and that any increase would exacerbate hardship.</p> <p>Several Cllrs asked about collaboration with other local food banks, reserves policy, and support needs from Somerset Council. Fair Frome confirmed regular cooperation with regional networks, which reserves now needed careful rebuilding after difficult years, and that their most pressing concern remained local housing shortages and communication between agencies.</p>	
2026/05/CP	<p><b>5. For information – Climate Action update</b>                      Climate Action Lead, Matt Mellen delivered a detailed overview of current climate work, beginning with sobering data confirming 2025 as the hottest summer on record. He emphasised that while global thresholds such as the 1.5°C target were likely to be exceeded, local action remained critical both in reducing emissions and in adapting to unavoidable climate impacts. Matt summarised progress under three themes: engagement, mitigation, and adaptation. He explained the success of the "Solar &amp; Beyond" campaign, increased interest in home energy retrofitting, collaboration with FRECO, and the exploration of solar canopies for car parks. He described extensive community</p>	

	<p>engagement, including workshops with Rob Hopkins and the adaptation partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>Andy Jones welcomed the work and asked whether local schools were being supported to explore solar. Matt confirmed contact with Multi Academy Trusts and the possibility of grants. Andy also suggested preparing a Somerset wide approach to high heat emergencies, similar to the cold weather Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). Dawn Denton noted she would also take this forward with SC. She also encouraged collaboration with Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) on their Rooftop Revolution campaign and raised the potential for water butt schemes. Matt confirmed ongoing discussions.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed measurement of retrofit impact, with Matt explaining that data was being captured and would feed into a full Green &amp; Healthy Frome evaluation report in March.</p> <p>Tracey Ashford left the meeting at 8.28pm</p>	
<p>2026/06/CP</p>	<p><b>6. For decision – A new process to inform decision making on events</b></p> <p>Peter Wheelhouse presented a summary of the report. He outlined that there had been a need for a clearer, more consistent and accountable process for evaluating and supporting events. The proposed system included a three stage process: an event proposal form, assessment by an Events Advisory Group comprising Cllrs and officers, and final ratification by the committee for expenditure.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the accessibility of the form, with some advocating simplification and others noting that event planning necessarily required thoughtful preparation. Several Cllrs highlighted the importance of ensuring events aligned with the Council Plan, understanding resource implications, and avoiding overextension.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether community members should be invited onto the Advisory Group. While some Cllrs felt the group needed experienced event organisers, others emphasised the importance of representing hard-to-reach communities. It was agreed that the group could proactively seek input from wider community voices even if not formally on the panel.</p> <p>Cllrs agreed the primary purpose of the process was to bring transparency, reduce ad-hoc decision-making, and prioritise events with meaningful community impact.</p>	

	<p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create an Events Advisory Group to support and advise the Marketing and Communications Manager as events come forward with councillors Tracey Ashford, Anita Collier, Nick Dove and Lyndsey Mayhew</li> <li>2. Adopt the events process as above</li> <li>3. Delegate authority to the Marketing and Communications Manager in consultation with the Town Clerk to take decisions around the events that we will support taking account of the advice from the Events Advisory Group</li> <li>4. Bring a report with a table of decisions taken back to this committee for ratification to enable the minuting for financial governance reasons</li> </ol> <p>The recommendations were proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Andy Jones, and passed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2026/07/CP</p>	<p><b>7. A verbal update on the work of the Children and Young People’s Project Officer</b></p> <p>Melody Hunter Evans presented an enthusiastic and well received update on the School Councils Voice Project. She described engagement with children aged 4–19 across all schools and the home education community, capturing thousands of ideas about what made Frome special and what young people wanted for their town and schools.</p> <p>Themes included parks and green spaces, access to shops (especially food outlets), swimming and water activities, pride in the town, and improving cleanliness. Melody outlined how the work had already led to new youth driven initiatives, including the Secret Shoppers scheme, co-design of Mary Baily, and the new Young People’s Grants panel. She also highlighted emerging collaborations with medical practices and community groups to develop youth participation further.</p> <p>Cllrs praised the work of Melody and asked questions about gender balance, accessibility, swimming provision, and safety of wild water sites. Melody confirmed balanced participation and welcomed future support for improving local water access.</p>	
<p>2026/08/CP</p>	<p><b>8. For information – Review of the Community Engagement &amp; Development, Marketing &amp; Communications and Town Centre work programmes</b></p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>Katie provided a brief update on town centre issues, particularly around waste. She reported a noticeable decline in public waste</p>	

	<p>management performance since Somerset Council brought the service in house. She described work with local Cllrs, including a 'bin summit,' and highlighted concerns about new recycling legislation which would require multiple additional bins for flats and businesses.</p> <p>She also outlined a recent meeting with traders to explore alternatives to the proliferation of commercial waste bins, including reviewing Bath's successful daily waste collection model that eliminated on street bins in key areas. Cllrs expressed concern about capacity and thanked Katie for her persistence.</p>	
2026/09/CP	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 6 May 2026, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 9.16pm

DRAFT