Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 9 September 2026, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:
In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Sara Butler (Chair), Philip Campagna, Carla Collenette, Anita Collier, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Polly Lamb, Lyndsey Mayhew, Lisa Merryweather, Richard Pinnock, Steve Tanner, Andy Wrintmore

In attendance:
Georgia Clarke and Peter Macfadyen (People's Emergency Briefing event organisers), Adam Boyden (SC Cllr), Martin Dimery (SC Cllr), Dominic Ellison (SC Cllr), Jane Llewellyn (Acting Deputy Town Clerk), Rob Holden (Environment Manager), Matt Mellen (Climate Action Lead), Sarah Williams (Business Manager & RFO, online), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Hannah Stopford (Community Partnerships & Development Manager), Alastair Findlay (Facilities Manager), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Laura Flaherty (HR Lead & Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk), Noah Hardy (Support Steward)

Approx. 25 members of the public were in attendance at the Town Hall
5 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2026/91/FC	The meeting started at 7pm. Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.08pm Georgia Clark and Peter Macfadyen presented an update on the local screening of *The People's Emergency Briefing* held earlier in the year at the Cheese & Grain. Georgia explained that the national campaign had emerged from expert briefings provided to MPs and national leaders regarding the implications of climate and nature breakdown. She outlined the campaign's objective of securing a televised national briefing on the climate and nature emergency and described the growing support for the initiative, including support from MPs and the successful parliamentary petition. Georgia reported that approximately 320 people attended the Frome screening and highlighted the FTC's support in providing a British Sign Language interpreter. She described the extensive volunteer involvement, with 18 community volunteers helping facilitate structured post screening discussions. The emphasis of these discussions had been on allowing participants to explore and process their feelings and responses rather than immediately focusing on solutions. Feedback from attendees indicated that participants valued the opportunity to reflect collectively and	

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appreciated the sense of connection and community created through the evening.

Peter Macfadyen spoke about work underway to strengthen community engagement on climate issues. He explained that concerns regarding the ending of the Green and Healthy Frome programme and the reduced activity of Sustainable Frome had prompted discussions about developing a new community resource focused on climate and nature action. He described the emerging "Phoenix" initiative, which had brought together local residents and professionals with expertise in the field. Peter suggested there was growing recognition of the urgency of climate issues following events witnessed nationally and internationally over the summer and said there was renewed energy for coordinated community action.

Georgia and Peter asked FTC to consider how all Cllrs and staff could engage with the film and discuss its themes, how climate and nature considerations could be further embedded across all FTC decision making, and what emergency planning arrangements existed for the town.

Sara Butler, as Lead Cllr for climate, responded on behalf of FTC. She thanked Georgia, Peter and the volunteers for their work and described the screening as a powerful and valuable event. She stated that FTC sought to integrate climate considerations across its strategy and decision making processes and recognised that declaring a climate emergency required meaningful action rather than symbolic commitments. She welcomed the points raised and suggested that opportunities should be explored to encourage wider political support, including engagement with MP Anna Sabine.

Lisa Merryweather highlighted the importance of emergency planning and stressed the need for clear accountability, communication and preparedness before any future emergency situation occurred. Cllrs reflected on the town's response during both the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, noting Frome's strong community networks and capacity for rapid mobilisation. However, members agreed that formal planning and public communication remained important.

Further questions were asked regarding future screenings of the film, and attendees were directed to the National Emergency Briefing website and interactive map for further information. Anita Collier praised the event and encouraged anyone who had not yet seen the film to attend a future screening.

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2026/92/FC	2. To waive Standing Orders to enable a Cllr other than the Chair or Deputy Chair to chair the meeting To allow a Cllr other than the Chair or Deputy Chair to preside, Andy Jones proposed the waiver of standing orders, seconded by Lyndsey Mayhew, agreed unanimously.	
2026/93/FC	3. Elect a chair for this meeting Andy Jones proposed Sara Butler as Chair of the meeting, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously. Sara then assumed the chair.	
2026/94/FC	4a. Apologies for absence Anita Collier proposed to accept apologies from Fiona Barrows and Anne Hills, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed unanimously. 4b. Declarations of members' interests None were received. 4c. Dispensations None were received. 4d. Approval of minutes from the last meeting on 5 August 2026 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 August 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair. Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Nick Dove, agreed unanimously. Sara Butler welcomed Dominic Ellison following his recent election to Somerset Council and congratulated him on his success in the by-election.	
2026/95/FC	5. Questions from public and Cllrs Philip Campagna provided an update regarding the Number 30 bus service. He reported that from 1 September the route now travelled directly into the medical campus, stopping between the hospital and medical practice 15 times each day. Philip thanked the following; from Somerset Council, Bill Revans, Mike O'Dowd-Jones, John Perrett, Lee Jones, Ian Stewart; from Frome Hospital, Heather Ancil; from Frome Medical Practice, Karen Creffield, Julie Carey-Downes, Elaine Morley and from Somerset Bus Partnership, Peter Travis who had worked collaboratively to achieve the change. He noted that evidence was now being gathered to understand the positive impact of the revised route on access to healthcare and reductions in private car and taxi journeys.	

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	Kerry Meech, Chair of the Friends of Frome Library, addressed FTC regarding concerns about the condition and management of Frome Library. She explained that the library had experienced repeated disruptions during the summer due to incidents involving rough sleeping which had obstructed emergency exits and caused distress to library staff. She also raised concerns about poor maintenance, noting that library windows had not been cleaned for approximately two years and that requests for remedial action had been repeatedly delayed. Kerry described an incident in which contractors engaged by Somerset Council removed and discarded material from the community garden alongside the library, and fly tipped the contents onto the river bank. She expressed frustration at what she considered a lack of care and investment in a valued community resource. Her primary concern related to the ongoing issues with the library's heating system, which had failed repeatedly over recent winters and had not yet been returned following repair works. She warned that there was a risk of closure during the coming winter if suitable heating could not be provided. Martin Dimery acknowledged the concerns and stated that some of the issues raised were deeply embarrassing from the perspective of a Somerset Cllr. He confirmed his willingness, together with Dominic Ellison, to support advocacy efforts on behalf of the library and encouraged continued communication with ward Cllrs. Cllrs discussed the possibility of future asset transfers and devolution arrangements but acknowledged that there were currently no plans for transfer of the library building itself. Cllrs unanimously expressed support for the library and agreed that a letter would be sent by Peter Wheelhouse, Town Clerk, to Somerset Council outlining concerns regarding maintenance, management and investment in the facility. Carla Collenette suggested that if Somerset Council was unable or unwilling to maintain the asset adequately, devolution options should be revisited. Lenka Grimes thanked Somerset Council officers for restoring the housing advice drop in service at Fair Frome, noting that the service had already proven popular and beneficial. The Chair read a statement from residents at Tankey's Close who had purchased sections of land adjoining Tankey's Close and Mendip Drive. The statement advised that significant portions of	**PWh**

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	the land would be offered for resale at cost price to enable community ownership and continued public access. Residents subsequently addressed FTC regarding the history and significance of the green corridors. Ingrid Curswell described how fencing and closure of long used green spaces had shocked local residents and divided the community. She argued that the areas had been used freely for decades and represented valued public spaces. A member of the public spoke about the role the spaces had played in everyday life, including dog walking, informal exercise and opportunities for neighbourly interaction. She described the loss of access as heartbreaking and emphasised the significant wellbeing benefits the spaces had provided. Mark Dorrington provided historical context regarding ownership of the land and previous planning issues affecting the area. He argued that residents who had purchased land had primarily acted to prevent future development and protect their homes. Josephine Boyd, speaking on behalf of the group that had collectively purchased and retained public access to part of the green space, outlined the financial commitment involved and sought reassurance regarding future practical or financial support should the community continue efforts to preserve the land. Adam Boyden reflected on the strength of feeling within the community and welcomed recent discussions that had enabled landowners to offer sections of the land back for resale. He suggested that constructive dialogue and community led solutions offered a positive way forward. Jane Llewellyn, Acting Deputy Town Clerk, explained that any future financial support would require formal Council decisions but indicated that FTC could offer advice, expertise and guidance where appropriate. Tracey Ashford emphasised that all parties appeared to share a common desire to retain open green spaces and hoped recent developments could help heal divisions. Rob Holden, Environment Manager, suggested that facilitated discussions outside the Council meeting setting would provide a more constructive environment for future conversations. The Chair concluded the discussion by thanking all contributors and expressing hope that dialogue would continue positively. The Chair proposed a five minute break at 8.07pm. The meeting resumed at 8.11pm.	

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2026/96/FC	6. For decision – approval of the FTC Annual Report 25/26 Rachel Griffin presented FTC's Annual Report for 2025/26. She explained that the report reflected a year of significant achievement, including the acquisition of community assets, support for local organisations, development of the skatepark project, climate action initiatives and improvements to community wellbeing. Rachel highlighted amendments made since publication, including recognition of grant funding awarded to Fair Frome and inclusion of FTC's developing equality, diversity and inclusion work. Lisa Merryweather asked about the inclusion of impact measures and performance indicators. Rachel confirmed that work was underway to establish meaningful metrics and that these would feature in future annual reports as part of service improvement work arising from the recent peer review. Anita Collier praised the report, describing it as comprehensive and well presented. The recommendation was to approve the Annual Report. Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously.	
2026/97/FC	7. For decision – To approve drawing down up to £200k of the previously agreed £400k PWLB loan for the Frome skatepark project, to enable the contract for the Skatepark works to begin. Polly Lamb and Rob Holden presented an update on the skatepark project. Polly reported that extraordinary fundraising efforts from the Frome Skatepark Project team had significantly reduced the expected borrowing requirement, potentially reducing it from £400,000 to around £200,000 or less. Rob Holden provided an overview of the fundraising achieved to date and explained that confirmed and anticipated funding had substantially reduced the project shortfall. He described further work undertaken with Maverick and specialist consultants to ensure that the new facility would maximise inclusivity and accessibility while retaining strong appeal to the skating community. Local skateboarders spoke in support of the project. Rafe Bishop explained that the current skatepark was outdated and inadequate and that the new facility would offer significant benefits for young people and the wider community. Cosmo, a young resident and	

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	regular user of the skatepark, spoke passionately about the positive role skateboarding had played in his life and the importance of creating a high quality facility in Frome. Cllrs discussed maintenance costs, future fundraising, ownership responsibilities and issues relating to litter and graffiti. Several members highlighted the wider community benefits of the project, including improved opportunities for young people, enhanced wellbeing and increased regional visitors. The recommendations was to approve the draw down of the PWLB loan of up to £200k, with exact sum to be drawn down potentially lower dependent on final details of funding shortfall. The maximum annual loan repayments over a 15 year term at today's interest rates would be £19,973 - 5.98% at 25/08/26 coming from budget code 700-7949 Proposed by Polly Lamb, seconded by Andy Wrintmore, agreed unanimously. Tracey Ashford left the room at 8.45pm	
2026/98/FC	8. For decision – to procure solar panels for the Ranger Base Matt Mellen, Climate Action Lead, presented proposals to install solar panels on the Rangers Base in Victoria Park as part of the Council's Solar and Beyond programme. He explained that feasibility work had shown good solar potential and that the proposal would both reduce carbon emissions and generate long term financial savings through reduced electricity costs. Cllrs discussed the initial quotations received and the importance of obtaining competitive prices. Nick Dove suggested additional suppliers who could be approached. Tracey Ashford returned to the room at 8.50pm The recommendations were: 1. Approve the procurement of solar panels and battery for the Ranger Base to be funded from the General Reserve 2. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Climate Action Lead to obtain competitive quotes and let a contract for supply and installation 3. Report back to Council on the outcome. Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Carla Collenette, agreed by majority. Tracey Ashford abstained.	PWh/MM MM

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2026/99/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 7 October 2026, at the Frome Town Hall and on Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.51pm

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Chair's Signature and Date: