

## Agenda item 7

For information – Review of the Community Engagement & Development, Marketing & Communications, Climate Action and Town Centre work programmes

### Community Engagement & Development

Author: Hannah Stopford, Community Partnerships & Development Manager

#### Highlights

- Engagement has begun on Brunel Green Corridor  
<https://myfrome.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/brunel-green>
- St Johns and the Mount community growing spaces underway  
<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/fromes-community-gardens/>
- Skatepark research complete and awaiting redesign from Maverick
- Community Organisation Networking took place 1 July
- Play Day at the Key Centre planned 5 August  
<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/celebrate-national-playday-2026-at-the-key-centre/>
- New grants programme redesigned with EOI stage now open  
<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/new-process-for-town-councils-community-grants-scheme/>
- YOU grant (Young People's Participatory Grant Programme) celebration event held in June, projects funded underway
- Mary Baily YP codesign project about to start building
- Successful Refugee Week events (film screening and walk) held in June
- Equalities Impact Assessment tool developed as part of Improvement Action Plan – being tested on projects internally
- Council meeting held at Key Centre in June, and new objectives approved – Coordinator and Cleaner contracts extended
- Tender deadline for nursery provider at Key Centre just closed. Interviews taking place 13 August
- Post 16 Education explorations underway, key stakeholders met and working group developing alongside Frome Economic Prospectus project

#### Sticking points

- Continued change and uncertainty in the education world, both with changes to alternative provision and consultation about future tier changes.

### Marketing & Communications

Author: Rachel Griffin, Marketing and Communications Manager

#### Highlights

- We have continued to develop My Frome, completing the first full cycle of engagement and launching a new programme of projects. Current engagement includes Market Yard, Brunel Green and the Movement and Place Plan, all combining online participation with extensive face-to-face engagement. The Nature Recovery consultation is due to launch at the Children's Festival.

- Meet the Councillor sessions have continued to evolve. Having resumed at the weekly market, they are now "on tour", with recent sessions at Brunel Green to support local engagement. The next stops will be the rescheduled Carnival Fun Day and the Cheese Show in September.
- The White Ribbon Campaign has continued to gather momentum, with a growing working group and the completion of a three-year Action Plan, which is now being submitted for White Ribbon accreditation.
- We hosted 350 residents for People's Emergency Briefing at the Cheese & Grain, bringing together residents to explore climate resilience and community action, alongside a pre-screening and facilitator training programme. We also successfully trailed using a sign interpreter for this event.
- The team has supported a wide range of community engagement activities, including Bat Count, Bird Box Making, the Sunflower Bed Project, Wool Women, Frome Connects, Coat of Hopes and the Kate Bush Flash Mob, each helping to engage different audiences within Frome Town Council's wider priorities.
- We were delighted to deliver another successful Frome Busks, bringing live music into the town centre and helping to support footfall for local businesses. It was a first for the big stage at the markets and it was a hit!
- Engagement with young people has continued through the Skate Jam and girls' skate sessions, helping maintain momentum behind the new skatepark project while encouraging wider participation.
- More than 300 children took part in the Wildlife Parade, supported by the whole FTC team alongside schools, artists and volunteers. As the closing event of Frome Festival, the parade celebrated creativity, community and our connection to nature, drawing large crowds into the town centre.
- Work has continued on a number of strategic projects. The brief for the new Town Council website has now been issued and we are awaiting responses from suppliers. We worked to build momentum around the Town of Culture bid and wider cultural programme, including the production of promotional materials and ongoing partnership working.
- Social media is continuing to support engagement with the community, balancing clear and transparent updates on council decisions with the promotion of local events, projects and initiatives. Over the past year, the council's social media presence has grown significantly, with followers increasing from 7,018 to 9,015 (almost 30%). We respond to questions, comments and messages, and use social media to encourage residents to get involved. Photo-led content consistently outperformed all other formats, with community events, local news, wildlife stories and celebrations of local achievements generating particularly strong interest. These insights continue to shape our approach, with a focus on high-quality, image-led content.
- And the Town Hall continues to thrive as a busy community venue. Alongside regular hirers, CAB, the Probation Service, weekly church groups, talks, film screenings and AGMs, it has hosted 16 weddings and welcomed a total of 681 guests during the reporting period.

#### Sticking points

- The current website continues to limit what we can achieve digitally, resulting in duplicated effort and reduced efficiency but this is being addressed

- My Frome has proved a valuable engagement tool, but we continue to identify functionality that doesn't fully meet our requirements. We met with Go Vocal CEO to influence future development and improve the user experience.
- The weekly markets have successfully transitioned back under FTC management, but rebuilding trader confidence, increasing stall occupancy and developing the markets as a destination will require sustained investment over the coming months and is a work in progress.
- The volume of engagement activity across multiple major projects including the Movement and Place Plan, Nature Recovery, Brunel Green, Market Yard and the skatepark will require careful coordination to avoid consultation fatigue whilst ensuring residents continue to feel their views are making a difference.
- Events continue to grow in scale and ambition, bringing significant benefits to the town but also increasing demands on officer time, volunteers and support services. Capacity remains a key consideration.

### Town Centre

Author: Katie Fraser, Town Centre Coordinator & Rachel Griffin Marketing and Communications Manager

### Highlights

- Positive engagement continues with Town Centre stakeholders, including our Neighbourhood Policing Team, with regular meetings. Next Town Centre Businesses meeting to take place in September. Date tbc.
- We continue to work closely with proprietors of empty retail premises and offer support where possible to expediate renovation works and/or occupancy.
- Grist Environmental have now been appointed as our preferred commercial waste contractor. Our Project Manager is liaising directly with local businesses to address their needs, support compliance and reduce the current impact of multiple service providers.
- Notices now present on site to invite consultation on introduction of 2 planters at the foot of Cheap Street. Licence due to be granted on 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- Conversations to explore Post 16 education opportunities alongside DWP underway with a focus on provision of work experience and volunteering in our town centre.
- We are starting to explore Coach Friendly Accreditation for Frome to increase midweek footfall. Looking to work with Somerset Council to address coach parking constraints.
- The weekly markets have continued to develop, with the successful introduction of a monthly Farmers' Market within the Saturday market, a growing programme of community activity including Frome Busks and local organisations such as the Sea Scouts, and a programme of enhanced summer markets. We are currently recruiting a new Markets Coordinator to lead the service and continue to build its future.
- Developing an enhanced summer markets programme, including Frome Busks, community organisations such as the Sea Scouts and themed market days to increase footfall and dwell time.
- Continued to invest in the appearance of the town centre including bunting in Cheap Street. We have new signage to support businesses.
- Town Centre ranger work continues, preparing for the new Discover Frome map boards and carrying out regular street cleansing, weed removal and graffiti resets.

- Continued to strengthen Discover Frome, with new visitor maps now ordered and work underway to further support digital functionality and town centre promotion.
- Supported a busy programme of town centre events, preparing now for the Palmer Street Bottle Street Party, and the Children's Festival helping to bring people into the town and support businesses.
- We have been working closely with residents, businesses, traders, artists and community groups to strengthen partnerships and promote Frome's events and support a vibrant, welcoming and creative town centre.

#### Sticking points

- Graffiti/tagging and flyposting continue to have a significant impact on the appearance of the town centre. Graffiti often reappears within days of being removed, and engagement with venues to tackle flyposting on both public and private property has proved challenging, particularly where premises operate primarily in the evenings. A longer-term, partnership approach is now being explored and will be discussed separately at this meeting.
- Parking on Boyle Cross continues to present challenges for market operations and event delivery. Staff are developing options to improve compliance, including the introduction of a physical barrier.
- Frome was unsuccessful in its Town of Culture bid. Whilst disappointing, the process generated valuable partnerships and momentum, and we are now exploring how this energy can be harnessed to deliver elements of the programme independently.
- Following the Council's decision to prioritise the Market Yard toilets, the Frome Riverside Vision has taken a different shape. The Frome Riverside Working Group is now focusing on developing the design brief for new toilets and the reimagination of the adjoining accommodation and surrounding apron of land. Further engagement will follow once that work has been completed.

#### Climate Action

Author: Matt Mellen, Climate Action Lead

#### Highlights

- The National Emergency Briefing film screening was held on Thursday 21 May at the Cheese and Grain. There was a strong turn out with over 300 people in attendance for the film and more than half of this number staying for the facilitated workshop after the film.
- A new network of climate network facilitators has emerged who are committed to supporting more events in the future. Mel Usher is producing an event in Beckington with our support and a specially tailored screening for families is being produced at The Key Centre.
- The climate and nature school engagement process preceding the Wildlife Parade was a success. Community partners held a series of workshops with primary-age children at eight Frome schools exploring our existence alongside and as part of nature, in a fun and accessible format. Parents and teachers appreciated the extracurricular input.
- The school engagement culminated with the Wildlife Parade on the 12 July. This event was a success with lots of positive feedback rolling in from community partners, parents, teachers and some of the councillors who were involved. It demonstrated how

climate and nature engagement can cross generations and be fun and reach new audiences.

- Keith Barnham, Emeritus Professor of Physics at Imperial College London, author of 'The Burning Answer: a User's Guide to the Solar Revolution' gave a talk at the Town Hall on how to measure Frome becoming the first UK town to achieve an all-renewable electricity supply. We are linking up with our efforts to place energy dashboards in FTC buildings, community buildings (e.g. the Cheese and Grain) and taking steps towards a townwide energy dashboard – which could be a world first. This would show, amongst other things, how much renewable energy is being generated in town and therefore enable us to accurately track our progress to Net Zero.
- Healthy Homes, initially developed through the Green and Healthy Frome, has evolved into a Frome Town Council service supporting residents with:
  - Energy advice and fuel poverty support
  - Retrofit assessments & Home Energy Pans with short-term and long-term support
  - Solar and renewables advice and support
- Green Open Homes to launch in November to showcase local examples of retrofit, energy efficiency and renewable energy installations.
- Project Officer Emma Parker (back from secondment to Frome Community Bike Project) is now fully trained to support Healthy Homes and volunteer coordination support handover completed; she has shadowed on drop ins and home visits to increase her understanding of the support we provide. She is also supporting reuse centre stakeholder coordination.
- Solar support has been integrated into wider Healthy Homes support, creating a clearer pathway from energy advice through to home improvements and renewable energy solutions.
- Demand for solar advice remains strong, reflecting continued public interest in reducing energy bills and increasing energy independence.
- Residents are receiving impartial advice on solar PV, battery storage and other renewable energy technologies through the programme's advice and outreach activities.
- Work is underway to explore opportunities for solar installations on community buildings, schools, commercial premises and council-owned assets across Frome.
- Discussions continue around the potential for local battery storage, community energy projects and innovative approaches to local energy generation and distribution.
- Collaboration with Frome Renewable Energy Co-op (FRECO) is developing, with opportunities being explored for a possible longer-term partnership linking renewable energy generation, retrofit support and energy advice services.
- A draft climate adaptation plan has been developed – the plan is to use MyFrome for community engagement.
- Following earlier questions at Council regarding the Cycle Together project (managed by Emma Parker on secondment until March 2026) and Frome Community Bike Project which has now take responsibility for delivery of cycling services, please find attached a briefing note at [Appendix 7.1 which can be viewed on the website here.](#)

#### Sticking points

- New funding is being sought to keep this climate action programme going. Fundraising consultant – Ruth Gerrard has been engaged to support the team. A first scoping exercise has been carried out mapping various potential routes to funding.

- The long-term sustainability of our Healthy Homes programme is at risk. The ending of Green & Healthy Frome and the availability of Centre for Energy Equality (CEE) funding present both a challenge and an opportunity respectively. We have identified the need to:
  - Secure future grant funding
  - Develop strategic partnerships
  - Explore alternative funding models
  - Create a sustainable delivery model capable of supporting continued growth
- Discussions are being held with key delivery partners and prospective partners including Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), CEE, Somerset Council and Wessex Community Energy Network. These discussions explore best practices, future partnership opportunities, possibilities of scaling across Somerset, and long-term sustainability for the programme. It has been highlighted that the Frome Healthy Homes approach is an innovative model that could help inform wider activity across Somerset, and that longer term partnerships and funding would help to support that.

| Community Engagement & Development                                                                                                          |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Aim: To improve the wellbeing and resilience of our community and the organisations that support them.                                      |          |
| Objective: A strong, connected community with resilient neighbourhoods where residents have the agency to create and access what they need. |          |
| Project                                                                                                                                     | Status   |
| Continue to develop the Hub model                                                                                                           | On track |
| Engage with residents at a street and neighbourhood level to build cohesion and resilience by working together on community-led projects    | On track |
| Empower communities to identify gaps, strengths and assets and to take action or resolve conflict themselves                                | On track |
| Objective: Community organisations are supported to meet Frome's needs, be self-sufficient and work together and adapt to change.           |          |
| Project                                                                                                                                     | Status   |
| Support and build capacity for community organisations                                                                                      | On track |
| Objective: Residents feel included in the life of the town                                                                                  |          |
| Project                                                                                                                                     | Status   |
| Embed inclusive and accessible practices and processes, internally and with partners                                                        | On track |
| Increase opportunities for meaningful engagement and ways for all voices to be heard and for residents to influence local decision making   | On track |
| Embed the inclusive play strategy across the town especially in our parks and open spaces                                                   | On track |
| Objective: FTC teams are supported with community engagement to deliver their outcomes                                                      |          |
| Project                                                                                                                                     | Status   |
| Work collaboratively with other FTC teams to deliver collaborative and engagement processes to deliver their outcomes                       | On track |
| Community grants                                                                                                                            |          |
| Support community organisations to access appropriate funding                                                                               | On track |

## Key:



On track



Project no longer on track without amendment



Project has been unsuccessful or stopped

| Marketing & Communications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Aim: To foster an informed, engaged, and cohesive community in Frome by delivering innovative communications, participatory initiatives, and inclusive events that strengthen collaboration, celebrate Frome, and support decision-making for a thriving town |        |
| Objective: Inform and engage residents around the work of the council to encourage participation.                                                                                                                                                             |        |
| Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Status |
| FTC communications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |        |
| Through community engagement develop a new and ambitious town-wide climate action plan (CAP) and coordinate actions by organisations in the town to implement it. Put in place an evaluation framework.                                                       |        |
| Support a programme of activity that enables people living and working in Frome to participate and engage in decision making.                                                                                                                                 |        |
| Support delivery of Town Events                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
| Ensure that the Town Hall is safe, accessible, clean, fit for purpose and well used                                                                                                                                                                           |        |

| Town Centre                                                                                                                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Aim: To progress several key initiatives that will improve the vibrancy of the Town Centre                                                      |        |
| Objective: Increased visitor and resident footfall to support our local businesses                                                              |        |
| Objective: Improve the image, experience and pride in the town centre encouraging more residents and visitors to visit and use its facilities   |        |
| Project                                                                                                                                         | Status |
| Improve the appearance of the Town Centre                                                                                                       |        |
| Encourage the occupation of empty shops and other vacancies                                                                                     |        |
| Town Centre Events                                                                                                                              |        |
| Support delivery of Town Events                                                                                                                 |        |
| Promote the town and its events to residents and visitors                                                                                       |        |
| Promote active travel and sustainable transport to encourage visits to Frome                                                                    |        |
| Maintain the You're Welcome project                                                                                                             |        |
| Footfall Data                                                                                                                                   |        |
| Mitigation: We plan to use event stewards to provide an indication of footfall in the town centre in the future and will keep this under review |        |

| Climate & Ecological emergencies                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Aim: To co-ordinate town action to mitigate and adapt to climate change                                                                                                                                             |        |
| Objective: ENGAGE & ACT - Enable individuals and organisations to make changes that contribute towards a net zero carbon Frome in 2030 and make a difference to their health, wellbeing and economic sustainability |        |
| Project                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Status |
| Track all appropriate climate metrics and keep councillors, stakeholders and the public up to date with climate science and impacts for Frome                                                                       |        |
| Climate adaptation planning - present climate scenarios and risks for Frome.                                                                                                                                        |        |
| Through engagement with the community bring sustainability data to life for people in Frome. Help people to visualise climate scenarios and how effective our response is.                                          |        |
| Convene meetings, liaise between groups, lead actions, enable innovation and collaboration. Host the Frome Climate Action WhatsApp Group                                                                            |        |
| Involve schools in climate action                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |
| Produce climate engagement events                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |
| Working with key stakeholders we want to keep evolving our climate strategy                                                                                                                                         |        |
| Campaign on key issues - community energy, nature recovery, green growth                                                                                                                                            |        |
| Objective: ENERGY - Enable the scaling up of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy generation                                                                                                             |        |
| Project                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Status |
| Townwide renewable energy coordination                                                                                                                                                                              |        |
| Support and enhance FRECo to drive an increase in the number of new community owned renewable energy projects in Frome                                                                                              |        |
| Support Frome householders on their retrofitting journey                                                                                                                                                            |        |
| CSE assess 50 homes per year and provide retrofit support                                                                                                                                                           |        |
| Provide energy efficiency advice and support - online, in person and at events                                                                                                                                      |        |
| Objective: MATERIALS & WASTE - Develop a circular economy in Frome, reducing the amount of waste leaving Frome and encouraging reuse and recycling.                                                                 |        |
| Project                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Status |
| Use Keep It Frome as our brand for nurturing and promoting a circular economy in Frome                                                                                                                              |        |
| Take substantive steps towards the launch of a re-use centre in Frome, for example, by commissioning a feasibility study. Work with Somerset Council and other partners to find a site for a reuse centre           |        |