

Minutes of a meeting of the Community and Place Committee

Wednesday 6 May 2026, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

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

In attendance:

Peter Wheelhouse (Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Officer), Hannah Stopford (Community Partnerships and Development Manager), Iryna Ladyzhenska (Welcome Hub Advice Officer), Laura Flaherty (HR Lead and Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer, online), Becca Evans (Business Administrator)

2 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall
1 member of the public was in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7zIMsWoDFE&t=84s

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2026/10/CP	The meeting started at 7pm Election of Chair In the absence of the Chair, Carla Collenette, Anne Hills nominated Lyndsey Mayhew to Chair the meeting, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed by majority. Lyndsey took the Chair.	
2026/11/CP	1a. Apologies for absence Sara Butler proposed to accept apologies from Fiona Barrows, Carla Collenette, Nick Dove and Steve Tanner, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously. 1b. Declaration of members' interests Anita Collier declared an other registrable interest in item 6. 1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 22 January 2026 The minutes of the Community and Place Committee meeting held on 22 January 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair. Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Anita Collier, agreed unanimously.	

2026/12/CP	2. Questions from public and Cllrs Lenka Grimes asked when the Council Sanctuary work would be coming to Full Council for consideration. Peter Wheelhouse confirmed that a paper was planned for the June Full Council meeting, at which point Cllrs would be asked to make a formal decision. No further questions or comments were raised.	
2026/13/CP	3. For decision - Objectives for a new Frome Town Council Website Tracey Ashford arrived at 7.10pm Rachel Griffin presented a detailed report on the rationale and objectives for commissioning a new Frome Town Council website. She explained that the website now functioned as the primary point of contact for many residents and was effectively the Council's front door. She outlined that while the current site performed an important operational role, with over 15,000 meaningful engagements per month, navigation, structure and underlying systems were limiting accessibility, searchability and long term usefulness. Rachel explained that a key ambition was to transform the FIND directory into a CRM backed system which would allow searchable and exportable datasets, improved categorisation and filtering, and the potential for community organisations to manage and update their own information. She emphasised the importance of the website acting as a clear gateway to My Frome and Discover Frome, making consultations, opportunities to participate and local events easier to find, while supporting local identity and the town's economy. She also highlighted the opportunity for the website to generate insight into what residents were looking for, where gaps in provision existed and what support was most needed, enabling more informed decision making. Accessibility and inclusion were described as a legal requirement but also a core ambition, with the intention for the new site to exceed minimum standards wherever possible. The proposed budget of £17,000 was described as an investment in long term digital infrastructure rather than a cosmetic redesign. Anne Hills welcomed the focus on accessibility and shared reflections from a recent digital inclusion summit. She stressed the importance of recognising that some people choose to be digitally excluded and urged the Council to continue offering non-	

	digital routes to information and engagement, including face to face contact, printed materials and telephone access. Anita Collier also asked about moderation and monitoring of content, particularly where external organisations might add information. Rachel clarified that events would continue to be hosted through Discover Frome with council oversight, and that the main ambition for community managed content related to the FIND directory rather than events listings. She explained that any self managed information would still be administered and monitored by the Council. Andy Jones queried timescales for delivery and whether the site would link more clearly to Somerset Council services. Rachel confirmed that completion was planned within the current financial year, acknowledging the scale of work involved in reviewing and archiving existing content, and noted that existing links to Somerset Council services would be carried forward. She also confirmed that the website would be commissioned through an external agency. Lenka Grimes highlighted the potential for the website to support international links with Frome's twin towns, including shared events and multi language access. This prompted discussion about how such functionality might sit alongside emerging platforms being developed by partner organisations. It was agreed that this was a valuable aspiration but would require further exploration, potentially led through the twinning association. The recommendations were: 1. To agree the objectives for the new website 2. Delegate authority to the Marketing and Communication Manager in consultation with the Leader and the Town Clerk to develop a brief, oversee the procurement process and to commission a new website Proposed by Anita Collier, seconded by Tracey Ashford, agreed unanimously.	PWh
2026/14/CP	4. For ratification - Marketing and Communications Events and Budgets Rachel Griffin presented the first ratification paper following the establishment of the Events Advisory Group. She explained that the new process aimed to ensure consistency in evaluating events against strategic fit, outcomes, capacity, budget and value to the town before events progressed. The proposed programme for the year was outlined, including developments such as an expanded Pride programme, a potential	

	Halloween drone show, increased partnership led events and strengthened volunteer support for recurring activities. Rachel noted that a surplus in the previous year's events budget had arisen through successful fundraising and sponsorship, and that although a separate decision on reserves would come to Council, the current programme used almost the entirety of the allocated budget. In response to a question from Andy Jones about inclusivity of the proposed drone show, Rachel explained that the intention was for a donation based ticketing model, with free or allocated tickets provided through community partners such as Fair Frome, and that ticketing requirements were likely to be driven by safety and stewarding considerations. The recommendations were: 1. Note the changes to upcoming events in the table 2. Ratify the additions, changes and budget lines to the programme of events as set out above for the upcoming year Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Andy Jones, agreed unanimously.	
2026/15/CP	5. For information & discussion – My Frome update and next steps Rachel Griffin delivered an update on behalf of Miles Macey. Rachel reported that 330 people had signed up to the platform to date, representing just over 15% of the two year target, with slower uptake than anticipated. While the demographic spread was generally positive, there was a clear gap in engagement from people under 30. Rachel explained that most visits to the platform were coming from direct engagement such as QR codes and printed materials rather than social media, reflecting wider changes in online behaviour. She outlined how the platform had already been used for a range of engagement activities, including consultations on toilets, play spaces and community woodland, and described challenges with the built in mapping function which limited the level of spatial feedback that could be gathered. She set out forthcoming uses of the platform, including climate surveys, transport engagement, resources for community groups and internal staff wellbeing. A key strength of the platform was identified as its ability to clearly show the stage of each project and to provide updates to participants, which had been particularly well received during the toilets consultation.	

	In answer to the discussion question ‘How can we use the My Frome platform to further increase direct democracy in Frome?’ the Committee discussed the relationship between My Frome, the main Council website and social media. The discussion emphasised the importance of ensuring My Frome complemented, rather than replaced, in person engagement and non-digital methods. Concerns were raised about accessibility of language used on the platform and the potential exclusion of residents unfamiliar with technical terminology. There was a wider discussion about the concept of direct democracy and whether decisions could or should be made through the platform. Members expressed caution about framing My Frome as a decision-making tool while participation levels remained relatively low but supported the idea of demonstrating impact by clearly showing how contributions influenced outcomes.	
2026/16/CP	6. For ratification – updates to the FTC Community Grants Programme Hannah Stopford presented proposed changes to the Community Grants Programme following feedback from applicants, the advisory panel and Cllrs. Hannah outlined challenges experienced during the most recent round and explained that proposed changes aimed to simplify the process and provide better support to applicants. She described the introduction of a clearer set of priorities aligned with the Council Plan, an initial expressions of interest stage to enable early support and triage, and a move to a single annual grants round. Improved alignment of application forms and terms and conditions was proposed, alongside stronger monitoring of the outcomes and reach of funded projects. It was confirmed that Mayor’s Grants would remain unchanged. A proposed timetable for the revised process was outlined, with expressions of interest opening in July, followed by a supported development phase over the summer and decisions made in November. The recommendations were: 1. Ratify the proposed changes to the Community Grants Programme. 2. Delegate to Communities Team and Grants Committee to carry out changes and make decisions on detail.	HS

	Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.	
2026/17/CP	7. For information – An update on the Welcome Hub Iryna Ladyzhenska presented a comprehensive update on the Welcome Hub. She explained that since opening in October 2022 the Hub had supported 232 displaced people, with 145 individuals currently receiving support. The majority were from Ukraine, with a high proportion in employment, reflecting a strong focus on independence and integration. Iryna described the Hub’s role in providing advice, signposting, English language learning, wellbeing support and community activities, highlighting extensive partnership working with local organisations, charities and volunteers. She shared examples of cultural, social and volunteering opportunities that had helped displaced residents feel welcomed and connected within the town. Particular emphasis was placed on mental health and wellbeing support, lived experience advisory groups and the importance of social activities in reducing isolation and trauma. She closed by outlining plans for Refugee Week in June and expressed sincere thanks to the Town Council, partners, volunteers and residents for their continued support. Cllrs warmly thanked Iryna for her presentation and the work of the Welcome Hub.	
2026/18/CP	8. A verbal update by Steve Macarthur on the C&G resilience project Steve Macarthur provided an in depth overview of resilience at the Cheese and Grain. He outlined key risks facing music venues nationally and explained how the organisation had mitigated many of these through strong governance, community relationships, charitable status and diversified income streams. Steve described financial practices including ticket income bonding, workforce development, safeguarding arrangements and digital security. He highlighted climate impacts as a growing concern, particularly overheating during summer events, and outlined challenges in identifying effective and sustainable ventilation or cooling solutions. Cllrs discussed potential support and next steps, including further technical exploration and links with council officers. Steve also outlined plans to offset environmental impacts through tree planting linked to sold out events, which Peter noted he would speak to Rob Holden, Environment Manager about in terms of suitable locations for planting.	RH

2026/19/CP	9. For information – Review of the Community Engagement & Development, Marketing & Communications, Climate Action and Town Centre work programmes Hannah Stopford and Rachel Griffin highlighted the sticking points from the report. Issues discussed included fly posting and graffiti, town centre parking, market management following the resignation of the independent operator, software challenges with Discover Frome events, and the completion of the Green and Healthy Frome programme. Cllrs acknowledged the intensity of work in recent months and expressed particular thanks to the Town Centre Ranger and officers managing interim market arrangements.	
2026/20/CP	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 22 July 2026, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.43pm