Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 5 August 2026, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:
In the Town Hall: Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Anne Hills, Andy Jones, Polly Lamb, Lyndsey Mayhew, Steve Tanner, Andy Wrintmore

On Zoom: Fiona Barrows

In attendance:
Lenka Grimes (ARC), Martin Dimery (SC Cllr), Tom Sturgess (The School of Graff), Peter Wheelhouse (Town Clerk), Jane Llewellyn (Acting Deputy Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager & RFO), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Hannah Stopford (Community Partnerships & Development Manager), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Laura Flaherty (HR Lead & Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk)

6 members of the public were in attendance at the Town Hall
2 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2026/80/FC	The meeting started at 7pm. 1. To waive Standing Orders to enable a Cllr other than the 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 Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.	
2026/81/FC	2. Elect a chair for this meeting Andy Wrintmore arrived at 7.02pm Nick Dove proposed Sara Butler as Chair of the meeting, seconded by Andy Wrintmore, agreed unanimously. Sara then assumed the chair.	
2026/82/FC	3a. Apologies for absence Anne Hills proposed to accept apologies from Tracey Ashford, Philip Campagna, Anita Collier, Richard Pinnock and Ben Still and from Fiona Barrows who attended online, seconded by Lyndsey Mayhew, agreed unanimously. 3b. Declarations of members' interests None were received.	

	3c. Dispensations None were received. 3d. Approval of minutes from the last meeting on 8 July 2026 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 July 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair. Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.	
2026/83/FC	4. Questions from public and Cllrs Andy Jones asked about the status of the planters installed as part of the Safer School Streets initiative. He queried whether they remained under the management of Frome Town Council and commented that many of the planters appeared dry and neglected. He suggested a community campaign encouraging nearby residents to take ownership of the planters and plant bulbs or other seasonal displays. Jane Llewellyn advised that the planters remained under FTC's management while Somerset Council's safety audit comments were awaited. The suggestion was welcomed and officers agreed to consider it further. Martin Dimery informed the meeting that there was currently a vacancy in the Frome West ward following the resignation of Cllr Mick Dunk. He explained that an election would take place on 3 September and noted the unusually short nomination period. He encouraged residents to engage positively with prospective candidates during the election period.	JL
2026/84/FC	5. For decision – to adopt and promote the Anti Racist Charter championed by Frome ARC Lenka Grimes, representing ARC (Frome Anti Racist Communities), presented a report seeking Council support for the Frome Anti Racist Charter. She explained that ARC had been established in 2020 as a volunteer led campaigning and education group supporting residents and families who had experienced racism in the town. She outlined the group's partnership work with schools, SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality) and other organisations. Lenka spoke about recent anti racism training sessions, which had been attended by Cllrs, council staff and representatives from local organisations including sports clubs and businesses. She highlighted a reported increase in racist incidents and shared examples of the experiences facing some local residents. She explained that the charter encouraged reporting, support and active opposition to racism and would create greater visibility for organisations committed to those principles.	

	Nick Dove praised the quality of the training and asked whether incidents referred to in the presentation had been reported to the police. Lenka confirmed that they had and explained that ARC also provided support to victims who preferred to report incidents indirectly or anonymously. Fiona Barrows thanked ARC for its work and reflected that, while Frome had a reputation for being welcoming and inclusive, the experiences shared by residents demonstrated that racism remained a real issue. She described the charter as an important step and expressed a wish for FTC and ARC to continue working together on future initiatives. The recommendation was to adopt and promote the Frome Anti Racist Charter for organisations and venues. Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed unanimously.	RG
2026/85/FC	6. For decision - To seek Council approval of the proposed process and timetable for developing the 2027/28 Budget and Work Programme Fiona Barrows introduced the proposed timetable and process for developing FTC's 2027/28 budget and work programme. She noted that the budget was one of the most significant decisions made by FTC and emphasised the importance of ensuring the process remained open, transparent and inclusive. She explained that FTC was not starting from a blank slate, as the current Council Plan still had a further year to run. The proposed process therefore sought to balance the need for community involvement with the requirement to align spending decisions with existing strategic priorities. Fiona outlined opportunities for Cllr, committee and public engagement before final approval of the budget in January. Cllrs noted the report. The recommendations were: 1. Approve the proposed budget setting process and timetable for the preparation of the 2027/28 Budget and Work Programme. 2. Note the opportunities for councillor, committee and community input throughout the process. 3. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the relevant Committee Chairs and Lead Councillors, to make any minor amendments to the timetable required to facilitate the budget setting process.	PWh

	Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed, unanimously.	
2026/86/FC	7. For decision - Council approval of the proposed approach to developing a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2027/28 to 2031/32 Anne Hills introduced proposals to develop a medium term financial plan. She explained that FTC had received a recommendation through its peer review process to establish such a plan and described the proposal as "a plan for creating a plan." Anne spoke about the value of obtaining specialist external expertise rather than attempting to develop the framework entirely internally. She stressed that FTC was not seeking to purchase a completed plan but rather expertise, tools and knowledge that would allow Cllrs and officers to produce and maintain future plans independently. She explained that AI had been used to help frame questions and develop a consultant brief, but that professional expertise was still required to ensure robust and reliable outcomes. Anne emphasised that the work would not limit the discretion of future administrations but would instead provide them with better financial information and decision-making tools. Cllrs noted the report. The recommendations were: 1. Approve the proposed approach to the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Plan. 2. Note the stages and timetable outlined in this report. 3. Authorise the Responsible Finance Officer to undertake the necessary research, modelling, consultation and analysis required. 4. Authorise the Responsible Finance Officer in consultation with the Town Clerk and Finance Lead Cllrs to prepare a brief and engage additional expertise and resource as needed to conclude the project in its first year, enabling the Council to be self-sufficient in future years. Proposed by Andy Jones, seconded by Andy Wrintmore, agreed unanimously.	SW SW/PW/AH/AJ

2026/87/FC	8. For approval – PWLB application for Market Yard Toilet block and associated area refurbishment - subject to lease agreement with Somerset Council pending. Sarah Williams introduced a report regarding a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) application linked to proposals for improvements to the Market Yard toilet block and associated Riverside facilities. Sarah explained that the recommendation repeated an earlier decision taken by Council but required formal wording specified by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as part of the loan application process. During discussion, Anne Hills sought clarification on the circumstances in which the loan would be drawn down. Sarah confirmed that funds would not be accessed until key prerequisites had been met, including completion of lease negotiations, development of the design brief and agreement of project costs. Lyndsey Mayhew asked for an update on the lease negotiations with Somerset Council. Sarah reported that the first draft lease had recently been received and was under review. She added that considerable preparatory work was taking place to ensure FTC was ready to progress once negotiations were completed. Fiona Barrows provided additional context from the Frome Riverside Advisory Group, outlining work undertaken to commission a masterplan for the wider area, commission surveys and prepare FTC to move quickly once all information had been gathered. She explained that the current focus was on building a strong evidence base before making final decisions on design priorities and required borrowing. The recommendation was: To seek approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £250,000 over the borrowing term of 20 years for development works of the Market Yard Toilet Block and surrounding area. The annual loan repayments will come to around £22,000 (est at July 2026). It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments. No drawdown of any approved loan will be made before a lease agreement is finalised with Somerset Council and the full cost of all works are known and adequate funding available through the PWLB, general reserves and/or budgeted income. Proposed by Polly Lamb, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.	

2026/88/FC	9. For information and discussion - Council Plan 2025-27 – a review of progress to date Peter Wheelhouse presented a review of progress against the Council Plan and highlighted a number of significant achievements. Peter reported that occupancy at the Key Centre had exceeded FTC's original targets due to successful engagement work with community organisations. He also highlighted progress at Tower View and St John's, where improvements designed with local residents had now been completed and were already well used. Regarding Aim 2, supporting a thriving town, Peter highlighted progress on the Frome Riverside project and successes in operating market activities within the newly devolved Market Yard area. He noted positive engagement from traders and community groups and expressed optimism about future footfall growth, particularly following the appointment of a new Markets Coordinator. Under environmental sustainability, Peter reported that 4,000 trees had already been planted towards FTC's target of 5,000, with confidence that the overall target would be achieved through additional planting associated with newly acquired hedgerows. He also described work undertaken by the Climate Action Team to support households in becoming more energy efficient and to address fuel poverty. Peter updated Cllrs on progress toward a Movement and Place Plan, extensive community engagement using the My Frome digital platform and the development of a new skatepark and youth social space at Mary Baily Playing Field. He announced that Somerset Council had agreed to provide approximately £121,000 of Section 106 funding towards the skatepark project, which was welcomed by Cllrs. The discussion question was: To inform the work programme and budget for 2027/28, should any of the objectives be amended? Martin Dimery praised the breadth and ambition of the Council's achievements, particularly environmental initiatives and community projects. He contrasted the Council's position with that of some other local authorities and commended the positive use of resources for community benefit. Martin also raised concerns about the financial position of Somerset Council and the possibility that further responsibilities might be transferred to town and parish councils in future.	

	Fiona Barrows thanked Peter and staff for their work. She acknowledged the challenges affecting Somerset Council and reassured members that future financial planning would consider various scenarios and potential impacts. She emphasised the importance of taking a strategic approach to any future devolution discussions. The subsequent discussion focused on future priorities and how much flexibility should be preserved for any future administration elected in 2027. Anne Hills asked whether FTC should be cautious about making commitments that might constrain future administrations. Sara Butler responded that having a clear framework was important and would help any future administration avoid spending valuable time establishing direction from scratch. Martin Dimery argued that FTC should continue pursuing ambitious projects and leave a positive legacy for future Cllrs. Polly Lamb noted that the Council Plan was grounded in extensive community consultation and therefore reflected the needs of the town rather than narrow political priorities. Fiona Barrows identified a small number of objectives which might benefit from revision, including elements relating to daily recycling collections and a reuse centre, reflecting changes that had occurred since the plan was adopted. She also reiterated her wish to see continued focus on improving and protecting the River Frome. Andy Jones suggested that FTC investigate potential new active travel funding opportunities. Peter welcomed the suggestion and confirmed that officers would explore any opportunities that supported strategic objectives.	JL/OK
2026/89/FC	10. **For decision - Town centre community art programme** Nick Dove introduced a proposal for a community art programme aimed at addressing graffiti and tagging in the town centre through positive creative engagement. Nick thanked the Town Centre Ranger, Mike, for his efforts in removing graffiti, and also recognised work undertaken by officers, particularly Rachel and her team, in developing potential solutions. He explained that enforcement alone would not solve the issue and argued that positive opportunities for creativity were needed. The first proposal involved spending £8,000 on transforming utility boxes around the town into pieces of public art created by	

	local artists. Nick explained that research and practical experience suggested that tagged surfaces were less likely to be targeted once they became recognised works of art. The second proposal involved a larger community street art programme, working with street artist Tom and the School of Graff. The aim would be to engage young people in artistic projects, improve the appearance of key locations, foster civic pride and create a trail of high-quality public artwork throughout the town centre. Polly Lamb strongly supported the proposal and thanked Nick and officers for their persistence in developing a creative response to what had initially appeared a difficult problem. Mark Dorrington welcomed the initiative and linked it to wider efforts to increase civic pride. He queried whether utility companies could contribute financially to artwork on their infrastructure. Nick explained that discussions with Openreach had secured support and permissions but not funding. Steve Tanner asked how the artwork would be maintained over time. Tom explained that anti-graffiti coatings could be applied, allowing future vandalism to be removed without damaging the artwork. Cllrs were advised that the works were expected to have a lifespan of around five years before potential renewal. Further discussion focused on artist selection, community involvement and ensuring that young people had opportunities to contribute creatively to the design process. The recommendations were: 1. Approve the Utility Box Public Art Programme with a budget of £8,000. 2. Approve the Community Street Art Programme with a budget of £20,000. 3. Approve the allocation of £15,000 from the Town Centre Investment budget (600-7962) to support both projects. 4. Approve a transfer of £13,000 from General Reserves to complete the funding package. 5. Delegate authority to Marketing and Communications Manager, Town Centre Coordinator and the Children and Young People's Project Officer in consultation with Cllr Nick Dove to work together to appoint artists, agree final locations, work with the Conservation Officer, obtain any necessary permissions, and oversee delivery of both programmes. 6. Following due diligence, to waive financial regulations to enable a local artist from The School of Graf working with other	RG/KF/ MHE/ND

Chair's Signature and Date:

	local artists to be commissioned to deliver the Community Street Art Programme. Proposed by Andy Wrintmore, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed unanimously.	
2026/90/FC	11. For decision – Amendments to Standing Orders Cllrs noted the report. The recommendations were: 1. To approve the following amendments to Standing Orders: a. Amendments to clause 15(2) confirming that the Complaints Committee will consist of at least six councillors b. Amendments to clause 15(4) confirming that the Complaints Committee will meet when required c. Amendments to clauses 18(1)(i) and 18 (1) (v) confirming that the Planning Committee will also consider licensing applications d. New clauses 20 (1), 20 (2), 20 (3) and 20(4) setting out the Terms of Reference of the Complaints Committee e. Renumbering of clauses to take account of the insertion of new clauses Proposed by Lyndsey Mayhew, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.	
2026/91/FC	12. A verbal update on twinning As Philip Campagna was absent, the planned verbal update on twinning arrangements was deferred until the next meeting on 9 September 2026. The deferral was proposed by the Sara Butler, seconded by Andy Jones and agreed unanimously.	
2026/90/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 9 September 2026, at the Frome Town Hall and on Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.13pm