

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 17 April 2024, 6.30pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Sara Butler, Philip Campagna (Chair), Mark Dorrington, Anne Hills, Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather, Ben Still, Steve Tanner

On Zoom:

Tracey Ashford, Carla Collenette, Nick Dove, Max Wide

In attendance:

Dawn Denton (SC Cllr), Martin Dimery (SC Cllr), Helen Kay (SC Cllr, online), Chris Bennett (Deputy Chair, Selwood Parish Council), Victoria Robinson (Frome Independent Market), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer, online), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

20 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall

3 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch to the discussion in full visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=alh3R_bHU14&t=13s

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2024/26/FC	<p>The meeting started at 6.30pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Anne Hills, proposed to accept apologies from Fiona Barrows, Andy Jones, Mel Usher and Andy Wrintmore and from Tracey Ashford, Carla Collenette and Nick Dove who attended online, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests As Frome Town Council is a member of the Frome Independent Market, Cllrs requested a dispensation to enable a vote on the recommendation for agenda item 7.</p> <p><i>Ben Still signed his dispensation request when he arrived at 7.02pm</i></p> <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed by majority.</p> <p>Anne Hills was unable to take part in the discussion and unable to vote as she declared an other registrable interest in agenda</p>	

	<p>item 7.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 13 March 2024 Paul Wynne gave a brief update on the toilets in the Market Yard. He confirmed that FTC were now paying for the cleaning of the toilets. FTC has a tenancy at will with SC to this effect to give staff at both Councils assess maintenance and repair implications before committing to a possible formal leasehold arrangements. The service level agreement for CCTV in the town was still in negotiation.</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 13 March 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Mark Dorrington, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2024/27/FC	<p>2. Questions from public and Cllrs John Drake from Fair Frome requested help from FTC regarding signposting to organisations who were able to refer those in need to the Food Bank. It was understood that the Somerset Access Point was closing and had stopped referrals. Both Anne Hills and Mark Dorrington offered to help find a solution.</p> <p>Martin Dimery was pleased to note that Critchill Court was to remain open. He did also express a concern that SC were proposing to reduce the Planning Committee membership from 13 to 11 members which could have a negative impact on Frome.</p>	AH/MDo
2024/28/FC	<p>3. A written update from Cllr Dawn Denton for information Cllrs noted the report</p>	
2024/29/FC	<p>4. A written update from MP Sarah Dyke for information Cllrs noted the report</p>	
2024/30/FC	<p>5. For decision – Approval of Chapter 7 Staff and Cllrs’ Protocol and Chapter 9 Councillor’s Code of Conduct Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to adopt chapters 7 and 9 of the Council’s constitution.</p> <p>Proposed by Lisa Merryweather seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed by unanimously.</p>	
2024/31/FC	<p>6. For decision – Selwood Garden Community</p>	

	<p>Ben Still arrived at 7.02pm</p> <p>Steve Tanner and Jane Llewellyn provided a summary of the report and reasons for the recommended objection to the application.</p> <p>Lyn Sands, a member of the group ‘Stop SGC,’ summarised their objections to the planning application. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The developers had admitted the proposal was only one way of developing land, it could be done differently. • Issue with not adding to town wide infrastructure • FTC had no say over affordable housing • The developer will have control over design code, not SC or FTC • Little employment in Frome meaning more people will have to drive to work. • It was a one size fits all, speculative development. <p>Pat Smith, a member of Frome Civic Society, summarised their objections which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTC points of objection could be strengthened with data. For example, travelling by car would be a necessity because of location, distances to key destinations preclude active travel. Also, with an anticipated increase of population of around 7,000 people, FTC should quantify level of inflow to evidence impact on infrastructure • No way to stop developers deviating from design codes • No responsible body to oversee the project if land owners and promoter walks away. The Civic Society would like to see governance established <p>Jenny Ragget, from CPRE, commended FTC for their approach. Her objections centred on the fact there was no Local Plan in place and therefore no way to scrutinise and for communities to comment. She also raised concern the biodiversity had not been assessed.</p> <p>John Clarke, Frome Area Community Land Trust Chair, felt the proposed development should be recognised for what it could bring to the town and the potential opportunity around social housing for rent and community development. He also recognised the challenges and the boldness of the proposal. He felt the challenges should be strongly addressed, such as providing infrastructure, green spaces and employment opportunities. Frome needed the development to enhance wellbeing of residents and needs of community. He also strongly advocated for a local lettings policy.</p>	
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	<p>Katy Duke, a member of the Civic Society, highlighted that – 100% affordable housing could be achieved on the site if developers were to offer landowners a lower price for that land.</p> <p>Elaine Pugsley, a resident of Dragonfly close, was concerned that access to the town centre would not be possible for those needing affordable housing due to the location. She also felt there was a need to be much stronger as a democratic community to compulsory purchase brownfield sites to build affordable housing.</p> <p>Chris Bennett, Deputy Chair for Selwood Parish Council (SPC), thanked FTC for working with them and to include their representations in the response. He highlighted that SPC were less than reassured by Wessex Water that they could deal with sewage. He noted the genuine need for housing but did not want piecemeal development which would happen at some stage.</p> <p>Sara Butler highlighted that the landscape proposed for the development had 62 ancient and notable trees. She noted the national planning framework showed that any planning application that would fell ancient woodland should be refused.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington read out a response on behalf of the Frome Chamber of Commerce. They note that out of a development of 95 hectares, 6.7 hectares are being allocated as employment space. This had been reduced from the original proposal of 12 hectares. The Chamber would like to see a needs assessment related to the decision to create employment spaces with certain designation. It was not clear whether the other mixed use non residential areas such as cafes, convenience stores, schools etc were included in the 6.7 hectares. They were concerned about the location of the proposed employment space as it was prone to flooding, meaning potential impact on any businesses. They highlighted the insufficiency of infrastructure to support commercial waste from such a low ground level on the site. And that access to that site would be through pre existing residential properties. With a potential 3k – 7k new residents, the employment space is would only enable 400 new jobs, making Frome even more a dormitory town. The Chamber noted their objection to the planning application.</p> <p>Matthew Kendrick, the Planning Agent on behalf of the developer, urged FTC to think about housing need and how long those in need of housing were currently waiting for affordable housing whilst the local plan is updated.</p>	
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	<p>Steve Tanner summarised that there was a need to know some of the data from the consultees as it didn't correlate with the experience. There was a need to understand how they were coming up with their decisions. It was also clear FTC should be part of s106 discussions so we have a say how the money is spent in Frome and its infrastructure.</p> <p>Jane Llewellyn provided a summary of the discussions and the points that should be included in FTC's response. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frome becoming a dormitory town due to lack of employment opportunities • Need to include data and statistics • Highlight the status of local plan and its implications • Include the need for a local lettings policy • Flooding at Wallbridge and the use of s106 funding • The concerns around Wessex Water's response • Asking other statutory consultees how they reached their comments • Ensure no veteran trees were removed • Include a needs assessment for businesses <p>The recommendation was:</p> <p>Whilst we (FTC) appreciate the work SGC have put into the application and endorse the master planned approach, we feel that there are too many issues that need clarification before we would be able to support the proposals.</p> <p>As a result, FTC objects to the application, based on the detail set out in report, together with a list of additional requirements and conditions should the application be recommended for approval by Somerset Council.</p> <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Detail of FTC's full objection is contained in Agenda item 6 For decision – Selwood Garden Community from page 12.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p>2024/32/FC</p>	<p>7. For decision – Proposal to change the structure of The Frome Independent</p> <p>Victoria Robinson, Managing Director, The Frome Independent Market, gave a brief presentation about the history of the market and the reasons for the proposal to change to a Community Interest Company.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to The Frome Independent’s conversion to a CIC 2. Nominate the Deputy Town Clerk to act as an observer at twice-yearly Board meetings and report back to councillors on progress <p>Proposed by Lisa Merryweather, seconded by Steve Tanner, agreed unanimously.</p>	PWh
2024/33/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 15 May 2024, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the meeting at: 7.53pm