

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 13 November 2024, 7pm
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

Present:

In the Town Hall: Philip Campagna, Anita Collier, Carla Collenette, Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Carla Collenette, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Andy Jones (Chair), Lisa Merryweather, Steve Tanner

Online:

Tracey Ashford and Andy Wrintmore

In attendance:

Toby Culff (People for Packsaddle), Mark Burgess (Young Somerset), Geraldine Fowler & Alice Caudle (Birth Connections), Ellen Vellacott (Super Roots), Martin Dimery (SC Cllr), Adam Boyden (SC Cllr), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Matt Mellen (Climate Action Lead), Nikki Cox (Partnership Lead), Hannah Stopford (Engagement Lead), Melody Hunter Evans (Children and Young People’s Project Officer), Rob Holden (Environment Manager, online) Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager)

Approx. 16 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=-BeDCKwj4So

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2024/87/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1. A short presentation from People for Packsaddle Max Wide arrived at 7.08pm</p> <p>Toby from People for Packsaddle began his presentation, outlining the group's objectives: resisting residential development, bringing the fields into public ownership, and focusing on climate, conservation, and community.</p> <p>Toby described Packsaddle Community Fields, emphasising their historical and ecological significance and their importance to the local community.</p> <p>People for Packsaddle had submitted a proposal to Somerset Council to purchase the site for £250,000, with a vision for enhancing the space through a new community woodland,</p>	

	<p>seating areas, a pond, and sensitive restoration of stone walls and hedgerows. They had yet to receive a response.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows expressed her frustration with the planning system and acknowledged the housing crisis in Frome, particularly the need for social housing. Fiona suggested a compromise where People for Packsaddle could work with Live West to create sustainable social housing while preserving a significant portion of the fields. Toby responded and emphasised their efforts to engage with local groups and understand housing needs. He highlighted the unviability of the Live West development plan due to the site's poor drainage and access.</p> <p>John Clark from Frome Community Area Land Trust supported the group's vision, advocating for community-led developments that met local needs rather than profit-driven developments.</p>	
<p>2024/88/FC</p>	<p>2a. Apologies for absence Anne Hills proposed to accept apologies from Polly Lamb, Ben Still, Mel Usher and from Tracey Ashford and Andy Wrintmore who attended on Zoom, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed unanimously.</p> <p>2b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>2c. Minutes from the last meeting on 2 October 2024 Peter Wheelhouse provided an update on the removal of the Weymouth Road residents parking scheme. Peter had received an indication that SC were no longer removing the scheme. Concerned, he wrote to SC's CEO Duncan Sharkey and Cllr Richard Wilkins to clarify their position and was waiting for a response. Martin Dimery requested a copy of the correspondence and to be included in the follow up.</p> <p>The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 2 October 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Fiona Barrows, seconded by Anne Hills, agreed unanimously.</p>	
<p>2024/89/FC</p>	<p>3. Questions from public and Cllrs Sara Butler raised concerns about the Environment Agency's new jetty and its impact on the riverbank. Rob Holden explained the necessity and infrequency of use of the jetty, emphasising its role in maintaining the river's flow.</p>	

	<p>Adam Boyden provided updates on Somerset Council's potential staff reductions, local government boundary changes, and ongoing consultations related to devolution and local plans. Adam mentioned the need for more foster carers and the importance of promoting this need within the community.</p> <p>Philip Campagna raised the issue of fly posting in town, suggesting a meeting to address this problem and improve the town centre's appearance.</p> <p>Martin Dimery informed the meeting about a petition from Selwood Parish Council to improve road safety along the bypass, with plans to meet with Highways officers in early January.</p>	
<p>2024/90/FC</p>	<p>4. For information - Children and Young People's' Projects – November 2024</p> <p>Melody Hunter Evans introduced the item, highlighting the importance of these projects in supporting local families and children.</p> <p>Geraldine from Room Baby Connections discussed their work with under-25 parents, providing one-to-one support and pop-up sessions at partner groups.</p> <p>Ben Waller and his team from Open Storytellers talked about establishing public living rooms for the learning-disabled community, with plans for a trial session at a local school.</p> <p>Mark from Young Somerset shared the success of their new youth group at the Key Centre. He emphasised the importance of community involvement in naming and shaping the group.</p> <p>Ellen from Super Boots Outdoor Kids presented the Go Kart project, a full-day event for children to design and build go karts using scrap materials. The project was part of a wider initiative to promote green and healthy play, engaging children in creative and adventurous activities. Ellen emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for risky play and empowering children to be more active and engaged in their community. The project aligns with the town's vision for green and healthy play, offering a fun and educational experience for local children.</p> <p>Carla Collenette asked how many people Baby Connections had reached. Geraldine explained they had had 10 contacts since September. She said they were aiming for 50% contact. The</p>	

	<p>model had some scope to respond to the needs of the people they were working with.</p> <p>Nick Dove asked about supporting young people in the town involved in anti social behaviour. Mark explained that funding was a massive issue. He worked in Frome College 2 days a week young people. They were exploring having a youth worker based at the medical practice. But the issue was around allocation of funding for better support.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather asked about the engagement from schools. Mark noted Oakfield and Frome College was great, however Selwood and Avanti wanted to do everything in house which had been disappointing.</p> <p>Melody noted that The Pod had also received funding for their project Seed Pod however this wasn't due to start until January 2025.</p>	
<p>2024/91/FC</p>	<p>5. For decision – to adopt the draft Frome Devolution Prospectus</p> <p>Max Wide introduced the Frome Devolution Prospectus, outlining the town's vision for taking on more assets and responsibilities from Somerset Council.</p> <p>The prospectus included four key areas: open spaces and the depot, town centre and economic development, early help and community support, and sustainability.</p> <p>Max highlighted the importance of taking on open spaces to develop them for community use and the potential for the depot to drive campaigns around waste reduction.</p> <p>The town centre and economic development section of the prospectus focused on creating a thriving environment for businesses and traders, with proposals for better control over parking and markets.</p> <p>The final section on sustainability emphasized the need for green routes and active travel through the town, leveraging the open spaces and depot for environmental benefits.</p> <p>Sam Evans raised concerns about the reliance on voluntary and non-profit support to deliver the vision outlined in the prospectus and whether the council had considered the cost implications and funding for these organisations. Max acknowledged that the funding and resources required would</p>	

	<p>need to be carefully considered in the negotiations with SC. He noted the potential for exploring alternative funding sources, such as devolution deals and innovative local funding models.</p> <p>Lenka Grimes emphasised the need to prioritise and engage the whole community to ensure the prospectus benefited everyone, rather than just focusing on an "ideal" vision. Max agreed that prioritisation and broad community engagement would be crucial, stating that the prospectus was the beginning of a conversation, not the end. He emphasised the need to build on FTC's existing relationships and conversations with the community.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather asked about the plan for engaging the community on the devolution proposals and how the engagement team would be involved going forward. Max and Hannah Stopford said that the engagement work and the devolution prospectus had not been as closely linked as they could have been and recognised the importance of this in future.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the draft Frome Devolution Prospectus as a basis for negotiation with Somerset Council <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather abstained</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with Cllrs Tanner and Wide to coordinate negotiations with Somerset Council with a report to be brought back to Council when further progress has been made on negotiations <p>Proposed by Sara Butler, seconded by Philip Campagna, agreed by majority. Lisa Merryweather abstained</p>	
<p>2024/92/FC</p>	<p>6. For information – A presentation of ‘Building A Picture Of Frome’</p> <p>Hannah Stopford presented an overview of the recent work to build a comprehensive picture of the town.</p> <p>The project involved a variety of data collection methods, including face-to-face engagement through pop-ups, an online survey, and commissioning secondary data analysis from Locality. The goal was to gain a robust understanding of the town's strengths, challenges, and priorities from the perspective of the local community.</p>	

	<p>Hannah highlighted the key positive findings included strong community spirit, good access to nature and open spaces, and a vibrant cultural and creative identity.</p> <p>The challenges identified included lack of affordable housing, poor mental health (especially in young people), road safety issues, and insufficient community venues.</p> <p>Hannah explained that the data and insights gathered had been used to inform the council's priorities, community organisation support, and new partnerships, such as exploring data collaboration around young people's mental health. She hoped that FTC could continue to use the data and the engagement approach to guide future work, rather than treating it as a one-off project. The aim was to maintain a dynamic, evolving understanding of the town.</p> <p>Nick Dove expressed concern about the cost and resource implications of the project, questioning whether the outcomes justified the investment of staff time and council resources. Nick asked for a breakdown of costs.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows acknowledged the value of the work but suggested a greater focus on engaging the community directly in FTC's decision-making processes, rather than just gathering data.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather asked about the future work for the engagement team in terms of devolution. Hannah and Max Wide agreed that the engagement work should continue to evolve, moving towards more deliberative and participatory approaches that directly involve the community in the council's decision-making.</p> <p>Geraldine asked about the project's efforts to reach out to and include the voices of people who may not typically engage in public spaces or events. Hannah explained that the project had identified some gaps in reaching certain groups, such as businesses and the education sector. She outlined ongoing efforts to target specific neighbourhoods and work with community organisations to engage harder-to-reach individuals.</p> <p>Anne Hills stated her hope that the data will be at the heart of future data gathering and that it is continued and added to. She hoped it was not a snapshot, but a continuous way of perfecting the picture of the town.</p>	<p>HS</p>
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	Jane Llewellyn noted how key this data had been in responding to Local Plan consultation from SC. The Local Plan sets planning policy for the next 20 years, and this data provided a real insight.	
2024/93/FC	<p>7. For decision – to increase responsibilities of the Oversight Committee on staff matters</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the changes to the Standing Orders to extend the remit of the Oversight Committee.</p> <p>Proposed by Anne Hills, seconded by Mark Dorrington, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2024/94/FC	<p>8. For information – Badgers Hill update</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report</p>	
2024/95/FC	The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 4 December 2024, Frome Town Hall and Zoom	

The chair closed the public meeting at: 9.01pm