

Minutes of a meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 2 October 2024, 7pm  
Frome Town Hall and Zoom

**Present:**

In the Town Hall: Tracey Ashford, Fiona Barrows, Sara Butler, Carla Collenette, Mark Dorrington, Nick Dove, Andy Jones (Chair), Polly Lamb, Lisa Merryweather, Ben Still, Steve Tanner, Mel Usher

**In attendance:**

Martin Dimery (SC Cllr), Chris Bennett (Selwood Parish Council Cllr), Helen Kay (SC Cllr, online), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Sarah Williams (Business Manager), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Lucy McMahon (Lead Marketing and Communications Officer, online), Katie Fraser (Resilience Project Officer), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor), Becca Evans (Business Administrator), Matt Mellen (Climate Action Lead)

Approx. 50 members of the public were in attendance at Frome Town Hall  
12 members of the public were in attendance on Zoom.

To watch the discussion in full visit: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6thf6OfgB7O&t=4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6thf6OfgB7O&t=4s)

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2024/80/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Fiona Barrows proposed to accept apologies from Philip Campagna, Anita Collier, Anne Hills, and Max Wide. Seconded by Sara Butler and agreed unanimously.</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests None was received.</p> <p>1c. Minutes from the last meeting on 4 September 2024 The minutes of the Frome Town Council meeting held on 4 September were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Lisa Merryweather, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2024/81/FC	<p>2. Questions from public and Cllrs Matt Mellen introduced himself as the new Climate Action Lead and expressed his excitement about working with the council.</p>	

	<p>A member of the public, Alan Whitmore, raised concerns about the Safer School Streets scheme, questioning its enforceability and the cost of special markings installed outside each school. Peter Wheelhouse responded, confirming the scheme's enforceability, and addressing the cost claims, stating the actual cost of the special markings was closer to £62,000 and not the £140k incorrectly reported in the press. Peter also explained the enforcement process, emphasising the role of the police in enforcing the timed restrictions to access and NSL in enforcing parking restrictions. Data collected since the scheme's introduction showed a reduction in traffic using the streets, although he did acknowledge that some compliance issues persisted. Fiona Barrows clarified that the funding for the scheme came from external sources and was not from FTC's budget. Peter reiterated the importance of community feedback and indicated that there was an upcoming evaluation by Sustrans which would be reported at Council in December.</p>	
<p>2024/82/FC</p>	<p><b>3. For decision – Whether to ask Somerset Council to remove the Weymouth Road residents parking</b></p> <p>A summary of the report was given by Jane Llewellyn.</p> <p>Kevin O'Shea, a resident of Weymouth Road, supported retaining the scheme, citing improvements in road safety, and addressing previous issues.</p> <p>Sam Read suggested a compromise of offering permits to all those in adjacent roads i.e. each household should receive 1 free permit unless they had off road parking. He felt this option would take away the disadvantages of the current scheme whilst also encouraging the use of pay and display car parks.</p> <p>Michael Stevens also supported retaining the scheme. He argued removing the scheme would make parking worse than ever before.</p> <p>Tracy Chedzoy, asked to see a compromise similar to the approach in the Bath area where you are able to park in residential areas for up to 2 hours. She felt this could be achieved in Frome.</p> <p>Paul Wynne read out a comment from Peter and Patricia Baker, residents of Somerset Road, who had noticed an increase in parking difficulties. They felt the scheme could only continue if there was a whole town wide review of parking.</p>	

	<p>Bob Ashford expressed concerns about the scheme's impact on surrounding streets and the fairness of the restrictions.</p> <p>Simon Moore and Charles Kemp shared their experiences of increased parking issues and the flawed initial consultation process.</p> <p>Tristan Powell and Chris Wyddridge argued against the permit scheme, suggesting alternative solutions for traffic calming.</p> <p>Mel Usher noted parking was not a local problem as he had seen other areas with similar issues. He felt a one street solution was not going to work. He recognised there was no right or wrong answer, and all points had validity. However, FTC needed to make a hard decision.</p> <p>Polly Lamb felt FTC should explore more options before making a decision.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows and Nick Dove emphasised the fairness concerns and the impact on local businesses and residents.</p> <p>Lisa Merryweather felt SC had put Frome in a position with no solution, she asked Jane if FTC could ask SC to act. Jane explained that SC felt FTC were best placed to assess the issues at such a local level. She acknowledged the discussions and compromises suggested. Frome's real need was a transport strategy for the town.</p> <p>Martin Dimery noted how this issue had been the most contentious, difficult and time consuming he had come across in his time as a Cllr. He highlighted how rare it was for an authority like SC to give the opportunity for a town council to decide democratically and urged Cllrs not to give it back. He acknowledged that the outcome was never going to satisfy everyone.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the proposal in the report and to request that Somerset Council retain the parking areas and yellow and white line arrangements on Weymouth Road and remove the residents permit scheme and the parking meters.</p> <p>Proposed by Nick Dove, seconded by Fiona Barrows, agreed by majority. Tracey Ashford and Polly Lamb abstained.</p>	<p>JL</p>
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<p>2024/83/FC</p>	<p><b>4. For decision - To request Somerset Council carries out a Community Governance Review to expand Frome’s parish boundary</b></p> <p>A summary of the report was given by Paul Wynne.</p> <p>Paul explained the need to extend the parish boundary due to new developments. The proposal was to ask Somerset Council to review the boundary, considering demographic changes and effective local governance.</p> <p>Fiona Barrows and Lenka Grimes supported the idea, citing the impact on local services and the fairness of council tax contributions.</p> <p>Chris Bennett, Deputy Chair at Selwood Parish Council, expressed concerns about the timing and the potential increase in council tax for surrounding parishes including Selwood. Chris requested that FTC defer the recommendation to the next meeting, by which time Selwood PC would have the chance to meet and discuss FTC’s proposal.</p> <p>Helen Kay noted she had attended a governance and constitution meeting at SC and she explained they were considering doing a light touch review of all parish wards. She promised to forward on further details to Paul.</p> <p>Mel Usher felt that most parishes would struggle to catch up with where they were going to have to be in the future. With the abolition of the district councils, he said more would be required of the local communities. He felt working together would be really beneficial for all.</p> <p>The recommendation was that Somerset Council urgently conduct a Community Governance Review of Frome’s parish boundary.</p> <p>Proposed by Fiona Barrows, seconded by Polly Lamb, agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>PWY</p>
<p>2024/84/FC</p>	<p><b>5. For decision – to increase responsibilities of the Oversight Committee on staff matters</b></p> <p>Paul Wynne summarised the report.</p> <p>Mel Usher asked to extend the remit further, to include a small of group of Cllrs who, with the Town Clerk, would approve new staff posts and fill vacant ones. Paul Wynne explained that a</p>	

	<p>new recommendation would be required. Paul suggested reviewing the wording and returning to Council with a new recommendation. Cllrs agreed.</p> <p>Andy Jones proposed to defer the recommendation until the Council meeting in November.</p> <p>Seconded by Sara Butler, agreed by majority. Carla Collette and Steve Tanner abstained.</p>	PWy
2024/85/FC	<p>6. For information – Badgers Hill update on the repair and improvement project</p> <p>Cllrs noted the report</p>	
2024/86/FC	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 13 November 2024, Frome Town Hall and Zoom</p>	

The chair closed the meeting at: 8.33pm