



Registered Charity No 1166492
www.fromesmissinglinks.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

24 June 2026

Frome Town Hall

Present: Chair Rich Ackroyd, trustees Tricia Golinski and Helen Johnstone, and approximately 22 supporters/members of the public.

Apologies were received from trustees Grant Gellatly, Ruth Knagg and Adrian Warren

Introductions were made of trustees and other key players, including the Friday Crew, Geoff Pell, Chris Green, Andrew Marchant, Chris Keynon and Colin Wisbey

Treasurer's Report

Rich reported that the current bank balance is approximately £70,000, with a further £10,000 to be claimed by December. However the next phase will require more than half a million to complete. The full accounts for 2025 will be published shortly and reported to the Charity Commission by October.

Nominations and Election of Trustees

Grant Gellatly and Rich Ackroyd retired from office and were re-appointed as trustees. Rich asked anyone else interested in volunteering to speak to one of the trustees.

Chair's Report

Rich gave the following report of the past year's activities:

In June 2016, Frome's Missing Links was set up as an independent charitable organization (CIO), having previously been part of Sustainable Frome and working with Sustrans. Amazingly, that is 10 years ago. Thanks to everyone who has made it possible and here's to the next 10 years.

It's always slightly odd at an AGM to talk about what we have done this year, while also looking at last year's finances and achievements. It's a strange juggling act. Either way, I hope this report gives some indication of the progress that we have made and our relatively strong financial position. As a CIO we do not make a profit or reward our trustees financially. Any monies that we hold will eventually be spent to achieve our charitable aims and objectives. To paraphrase our constitution, we want to create a series of safe accessible pathways for cyclists, walkers, and riders that avoid the busy



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and steep roads on the edge of Frome and to connect with the National Cycle Network route 24 at Great Elm. Everything we do has these seemingly simple but quite complex thoughts in mind. It may seem odd that we have cash in the bank, but no immediate dates set for work to start again. I can only repeat that it's a long-term project!

Achievements

We completed Phase 2 of our path from Great Elm to Elliots Lane, by adding an asphalt surface, 1.3km long in March 2025 and we had a grand opening ceremony in April 2025, where we were joined by the Mayors of Frome and Radstock and many of our local Councillors and supporters.

The history of Phase 2 is quite long, but essentially Network Rail agreement was awarded in 2021, the final landowner agreements were signed off in 2023. Following this, many weeks were spent removing old rails, breaking through dense foliage, fencing off a pathway and laying the basic rough surface for walkers in 2024. Tree works, gates and fencing and laying the asphalt surface (thank you Wainwrights) was completed in March 2025

In the months after the grand opening, volunteers have continued to install benches from old railway sleepers, penny farthing bike racks, signs, planted trees, and more fences. The Friday Crew now regularly work to clear picnic areas, sow wildflowers, re-build walls, add gates, fell diseased trees, litter pick and generally keep the path open for everyone.

Friday Crew volunteers also regularly clear and clean up several paths across Frome and surrounding villages. This year they erected new fencing on Whatcombe Fields for SOS Open Spaces. Feltham Lane is part of NCN24 and gets a clean-up twice a year. You may even have thought that the council did it!

Frome's Missing Links's volunteers have contributed several days of work in the new Community Woodland at Spring Gardens. Most recently, they have re-built a section of dry-stone wall and put in new, bigger gates and bike racks, to provide more accessible access to the woodland. These improvements mean it is now possible to cycle all the way from Frome town centre to Coalash Lane, using Phase 1 and Phase 2 of our path. Volunteers also worked on the Strawberry Line extension behind the Kings of Wessex School, in Cheddar. This was a two-week project to put a new bridge over the river Yeo. Our volunteers lent their expertise and time to this project and gained valuable insights into bridge construction. Another bridge project was completed in Shepton Mallet for the Strawberry Line extension behind the town football club. The ambitious Windsor Hill



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Greenway to Masbury, with a new path across the viaduct in Ham Woods to Thrupe Lane, also saw our volunteers getting involved. In doing so our volunteer base membership and skills have increased dramatically and most importantly all these initiatives have helped to complete missing links in the Somerset Circle of Active Travel pathways.

Trustees and volunteers have also continued with the publicity drive and spent time getting the message out via regular newsletters and press briefings. Our MP Anna Sabine visited the path and helped us to make new progress with Network Rail. We ran another successful Ceilidh and appeared at a few fetes and festivals. We continued to liaise with Somerset Council, Network Rail and Frome Town Council and support groups. Thanks to everyone who helps us with publicity and media – it's a never-ending job!

Aims

So, what's next? There are two main sections left to complete. Phase 4 is now a mere 1.5km, but a technically challenging section. The route south of Frome is shorter and in theory much easier to complete. The trustees have agreed that we need to work up our plans in both areas and concentrate this year on getting further permissions to allow the completion of both sections. We recognise that in this coming year, our emphasis is very much on completing the link to the north. As such, we intend to build further on our currently positive relations with Network Rail, which recently has seen some significant progress. We also need to firm up our agreements with landowners, especially where new owners have arrived.

Phase 4, Jack's Lane to Elliots Lane. Once an agreement is reached with Network Rail, we intend to start work at Jack's Lane. We believe we already have sufficient funds to create a sloped path to gain access to the railway track bed. This of course will just be the start. To complete the whole of Phase 4 will need some determined fund raising, involving major funders. Our trustees are already planning for this.

By completing Phase 4, we will link in with the Somerset circle idea, helping to create over 70 miles of traffic free path across Somerset. Trustees will continue to make regular contact with other bodies who are trying to make this happen. As stated earlier, we have taken part in practical workdays along the Strawberry Line and Windsor Hill paths near Shepton Mallet and fed information into Somerset's Active Travel network and other influential groups. These sorts of joint ventures will continue.



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We will continue to work with the Frome Community Bike Project who go from strength to strength and who also contribute to our funds when they are able.

Using money from a successful SALC grant we will be adding further signage and story boards along our route and will continue to work with local Parish Councils at Great Elm, Mells and Buckland Dinham who are very supportive of our plans. We also intend to get some usage numbers. Just how many trips are made along our routes and what sort of transportation? We intend to create a user survey document and conduct regular surveys along the path, to get a clearer picture of numbers and hopefully prove that public support is there. This will help us to state our case enormously with future funding applications.

Finally

Many thanks to the various funding agencies, contractors, local authorities and businesses who have helped us, often at cost or on a gratis basis. Too many to mention them all here, but we should thank Mendip and Somerset Council, Frome Town Council, Great Elm Parish Council, Buckland Dinham Parish Council, Mells Parish Council, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (Sustrans), Railway Paths Ltd, Active Travel England, Sports England, Frome Wheelers, Frome CTC, Frome Community Bike Project, anonymous donors, Wainwrights for the surfacing, and of course members of the public for supporting us on the Crowdfunder appeal. Thank you all.

And finally, last but certainly not least, a massive heartfelt thank you to Mr Geoff Pell, whose vision and tenacity made all this possible. Geoff, whether you like it or not, you are the backbone of this project, and everyone today owes you a huge thank you.

Dave Hamilton gave a presentation of his latest book *Weird Guide Britain: An Atlas of 300 Curious Corners, Wild Wonders and Sublime Structures*

Dave showed some amazing images from the book, covering things like public art and sculpture parks, film and TV locations, geology and rocks, shipwrecks, cycle tracks and other oddities and surprise sightings.