

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee
Held on Tuesday 16th April 2024, at Bruton Community Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Anderton, Cullen (Chair), Coulter, Crawford, Fradley, Jones (Vice Chair), Robinson.

In the chair: Cllr Cullen

Officers present: Town Clerk

Members of the public: none in attendance.

The Public session was not required.

Meeting started at: 7.30 pm

MINUTES

FR23/48: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

To receive and approve any apologies of absence and to approve the reasons given.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hood and Buckland.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0][for-against-abstain] to receive apologies and approve the reasons given.

FR23/49: Declarations of interest

Declarations of Interests Members to declare any interests, including disclosable pecuniary interests, they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any written requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e) (This does not preclude any later declaration).

- None

FR23/50: [Minutes of the last meeting](#) held on 8th January 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).

To agree the minutes from the meeting on 8th January 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2024 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

The minutes were signed by Cllr Cullen.

FR23/51: Actions from the last meeting.

To receive a short verbal update from the clerk regarding actions from the last meeting.

Actions from the last meeting were overviewed, and the clerk confirmed that the new account with Churches, Charities and Local Authorities has now been opened.

FR23/52: Review of Risk Register.

To review the Risk Register, and consider any changes if required (last reviewed January 2024).

The Risk Register is now published on the Bruton Town Council website.

Item 6d, a three yearly full risk assessment of trees is required, and an annual inspection by the Tree Warden. Quotes are required from tree surgeons to conduct a full tree survey for trees that are the responsibility of Bruton Town Council, for consideration. This is an action from the review of the Risk Register in November 2023, and the best time to conduct the survey needs to be established..

The trees at Station Road Car Park are giving cause for concern. Quotes were obtained some time ago, and as a matter of urgency Officers need to revisit these quotes.

No further revisions to the Risk Register as reviewed. The frequency of the review of the Risk Register was discussed, and it was agreed that the Risk Register needs to be reviewed by this committee on a quarterly basis.

FR23/53: End of year 2023/2024

- a. To review the bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2024.

The bank reconciliations were provided to demonstrate the final end of year balances in order to discuss Earmarked Reserves. The clerk proposed that a bank reconciliation along with redacted bank statements, to be published on the town council website as part of full council meeting papers.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] that redacted bank statements be published on the town council website, with the bank reconciliation, on a monthly basis.

- b. To review end of year Annual Governance and Accountability Return and supporting papers.

The clerk overviewed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (draft) and the need to restate the balance brought forward, and the payments figure (Box 6) by £3, as there had been an error in the previous year concerning a credit card fee being applied twice.

Variances (differences between the end of year figures for 2022/23 and 2023/24 that are greater than 15%) were highlighted by the clerk, and a brief overview of the reasoning was given.

The clerk also brought to the attention to councillors the large difference in the Fixed Asset Register due to register value of fixed assets (Engine Shed, Patwell Pump and the war memorial) being amended to a nominal value of £1, rather than the insurance value, as was previously the case. This change results in the Fixed Asset Register value being quantified to the External Auditor, and the question was to either restate the figure submitted last year, or to submit the figure agreed for 2023/2024, and provide an explanation for the variances. The clerk is to consult external auditor for further guidance.

FR23/54: To review Earmarked Reserves.

- a. To agree to transfer to Earmarked Reserves the project amounts from the 2023/24 budget.

The clerk confirmed that transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves is a full council decision, and any resolutions passed would be for a recommendation to take to full council to be ratified.

The clerk overviewed the end of year balances from the 2023/24 budget 'Services and Projects', for consideration. The previous Earmarked Reserve for Men's Shed was transferred back into General Funds in June 2023.



Earmarked Reserve	Balance at 31.03.24	Recommendations to Full Council	Proposed new balance At 31.03.24
Jubilee Park Youth Area	£12,133.73		£12,133.73
Jubilee Park Dev programme	£9913.92	Add £7,499 from 23/24 budget	£17412.92
County Fields	£5694.00	Add £2,500 from 23/24 budget	£8,194.00
MUGA Sinking Fund	£5,000	Add £1,000 from 23/24 budget	£6,000
Walls Maintenance	£9,220	Add £1,755.62 from 23/24 budget	£10,795.62
Station Road Car Park SF	£11,500	Add £2,500 from 23/24 budget	£14,000
Library Junction	£7,500		£7,500
Signage/Fingerposts	£1,000	Add £3,000 from 23/24 budget	£4,000
Project and Grant Fund	£2,550		£2,550
Climate Emergency	£5,000		£5,000
Grit bins	£1,000		£1,000
Walking and cycling	£3,850	Add £905 from 23/24 budget	£4,755
Footpaths	£1,000	Add £300 from 23/24 budget	£1,300
Notice boards	£900		£900
Jubilee Park Play Area SF	£10,078		£10,078
SALC Reconnecting Communities (Eastfield)	£840		£840
Neighbourhood Plan	£5,000		£5,000
SPARK Men's Shed	£0.00	Add £2,500 from 23/24 budget	£2,500
Local Community Network Youth	£5,000	Add £5,000 from 23/24 budget	£10,000
Brubowl	£21,636.67		£21,636.67
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	£1,300.99		£1,300.99
Abbey Ponds	£1,180.00	Add £1750.00 from 23/24 budget	£2,930
Total earmarked reserves	£121,297.31	Proposed total earmarked reserves	£150006.93
General funds at 31.03.24	£80,635.56	General funds after transfers	£51,925.94
Total funds at 31.03.24	£201,932.87	Total funds at 31.03.24	£201,932.87

Councillors are concerned that General Reserves being depleted, and not replenished. These concerns need to be discussed as part of the budget setting process. A General Reserve level of 3 to 6 months of normal expenditure is best practice, and councillors are concerned that this is not the case.

Earmarked reserves have an arbitrary status, and for some of the categories listed, funds can be repurposed.

At 31st March 2024 General Reserves are at around £50k (after proposed transfers as listed). The clerk needs to establish if this value represents 3 to 6 months of general expenditure, and report back to this committee.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to recommend to Full Council to agree the transfers from the 2023/24 budget into Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the above table.

- b. To agree to transfer to Earmarked Reserves the project amounts from the 2024/25 budget (rather than at the end of the next financial year).

Earmarked Reserve	Proposed Balance at 31.03.24 after previous transfers	Recommendations to Full Council from 2024/25	Proposed balance At 30.04.24
Jubilee Park Youth Area	£12,133.73		£12,133.73
Jubilee Park Dev programme	£17,412.92		£17,412.92
County Fields	£8,194.00		£8,194.00
MUGA Sinking Fund	£6,000	Add £1,000 from 24/25 budget	£7,000
Walls Maintenance	£10,975.62	Add £5,000 from 24/25 budget	£15,975.62
Station Road Car Park SF	£14,000	Add £1,250 from 24/25 budget	£15,250
Library Junction	£7,500		£7,500
Signage/Fingerposts	£4,000		£4,000
Project and Grant Fund	£2,550		£2,550
Climate Emergency	£5,000		£5,000
Grit bins	£1,000		£1,000
Walking and cycling	£4,755	Add £1,000 from 24/25 budget	£5,755
Footpaths	£1,300		£1,300
Notice boards	£900		£900
Jubilee Park Play Area SF	£10,078	Add £5,000 from 24/25 budget	£15,078
SALC Reconnecting Communities (Eastfield)	£840		£840
Neighbourhood Plan	£5,000		£5,000
SPARK Men's Shed	£2,500	Add £2,500 from 23/24 budget	£2,500

Earmarked Reserve	Proposed Balance at 31.03.24 after previous transfers	Recommendations to Full Council from 2024/25	Proposed balance At 30.04.24
Local Community Network Youth	£10,000	Leave budget allocation within the 24/25 budget	£10,000
Brubowl	£21,636.67		£21,636.67
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	£1,300.99		£1,300.99
Abbey Ponds	£2930	Leave budget allocation within 24/25 budget	£2,930
Total earmarked reserves	£150,006.93	Proposed total earmarked reserves	£163,256.93

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to make the transfers from 2024/25 budget allocation (in Services and Projects) to the corresponding Earmarked Reserve, as listed in the table above.

FR23/55: Regular payments and subscriptions.

- a. To review and agree regular direct debits (on the town council current account) and payments as per the list circulated
- b. .

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to agree the list of regular direct debits currently active on Bruton Town Council current account, as previously circulated.

Cllrs Robinson and Jones declared a pecuniary and a non pecuniary interest respectively in FR23/55b and left the meeting at 8.10pm.

- c. To review and agree the current subscriptions.

The continuation of the annual subscription for Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) was discussed.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to continue with the annual subscription of (SALC).

Cllrs Robinson and Jones rejoined the meeting at 8.12pm.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to continue with the remaining annual subscriptions on the list previously circulated, apart from Zoom, which is to be cancelled before the next renewal date (March 2025).

FR23/56: Electricity Supply at Bruton Jubilee Park Pavilion.

To receive a short verbal report from the clerk regarding a recent meeting with a member of the Jubilee Park Pavilion Trust Committee.

A meeting is required with the whole trust committee rather than one representative member. It was recommended that should a further grant application be submitted in future years, that supporting evidence for all user groups that use the pavilion would be required, as per the Community Grant Guidance, in order to submit an application (for example, accounts/financial information for the previous 12 months).

Ideally the process should be: the electricity supply should go back into the control of the Pavilion Trust. A one off grant for this current financial year to be approved to pay the electricity supply, from the town council 2024/25 budget. The Pavilion Trust should be applying for the grant which will cover the running costs and maintenance, in future years, but on behalf of all user groups (see previous comments regarding required supporting paperwork).

Meter readings required are require for the MUGA floodlight usage.

It was proposed: to recommend to full council that the electricity supply is transferred to the Jubilee Park Pavilion Trust, an additional grant made to them for the rest of the financial year (which is in the budget) to meet the electricity cost, and that the Jubilee Park Pavilion Trust consider the electricity supply costs in their grant application for the following financial year.

It was RESOLVED [5-1-1] to agree the above proposal and recommend the proposal to Full Council regarding the electricity supply at Jubilee Park Pavilion.

FR23/57: To agree the list of Community Grant applications to be recommended to full council for payment at the end of April.

Application	Amount	Recommendation to full council
Bruton Choral Society	£500	pay
Bruton Festival of arts	£1,500	Awaiting additional information, not pay until finance information received

Application	Amount	Recommendation to full council
Bruton Library	£1592	pay
Bruton Library	£600	pay
Bruton Museum	£1,000	pay
Bruton Memory Cafe	£500	pay
BUFC	£1,900	pay
Citizens Advice	£1262.50	pay
Friends of Bruton Railway Station	£176.00	pay
Friends of Sexeys School	£750	Further details regarding programme delivery required, not pay until received
Jubilee Park Pavilion	£1000	pay
Mini Day Centre	£200	pay
One Planet Bruton	£155	pay
Promise works	£800	pay
SSCAT (Cat Bus)	£1500.00	pay
The Growing Space	£1100	pay
Total to pay	£12285.50	

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to write again to Bruton Festival of Arts and Friends of Sexeys school, to confirm that the grant funding is approved but the additional information is require before it can be paid.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] that the list of the grants awarded can be recommended to be paid as this committee is satisfied that the grant application conditions have been met.

FR23/58: Cemetery

- a. To consider the request for a memorial placement on an ashes plot, and to consider waiving the fees.

The clerk overviewed the issues with the cremated remains grave space, and the interment that took place in 2022. Councillors felt that a longstanding member of the community should be accommodated, and every effort to be made to make sure the memorial can be placed. The clerk is to be guided by the advice received from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) regarding the Exclusive Rights of Burial for the grave space, and act accordingly.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] that the fee for the memorial installation is to be waived, and that the clerk be guided by the ICCM advice regarding the Exclusive Rights Of Burial for the cremated remains grave space.

- b. To discuss the recent complaint regarding a damaged memorial stone at Cuckoo Hill cemetery.

An overview of the recent complaint was provided by the clerk, and a decision was not required.

FR23/59: To receive an update regarding reinstatement valuations, and condition statements for Bruton Town Council assets.

As agreed at Town Committee. To receive a short update from the clerk regarding actions to date and to discuss the next actions.

A Reinstatement Value for the three assets in question – the Engine Shed, the Patwell Pump and the War Memorial – are required for insurance cover. It is recognised that the current insurance value needs to be reviewed. An ‘unlimited’ policy cover would be ideal world. The clerk is to contact the current insurance provider, to discuss this further, and to enquire if the insurance provider can assist with giving a ‘ball park’ figure of the reinstatement valuation of the three assets concerned..

An overview of the required condition statement, for the same three assets, was provided by the clerk. The contractor submitting the quote to conduct the condition survey is not able to provide a reinstatement valuation. A quote for a reinstatement valuation has been obtained from an alternative provider, but further discussion is required with the current insurance provider before a decision is made to go ahead.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to accept the quote from Philip Hughes Associates for the condition statement for both the three assets (Engine Shed, Patwell Pump and the War Memorial) and also the additional quote for a condition survey for the closed churchyard walls, and grave stones.

FR23/60: Date of next meeting.

The next meeting is provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 18th June 2024, (venue to be determined) in Bruton Community Hall.

Agenda items for next meeting: Review the scheme of delegation, Review financial regulations.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.

END OF MINUTES