

**Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee**  
**Held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024, at Bruton Community Hall, 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Councillors Buckland (arrived 7.45pm), Cullen (arrived 7.38pm), Coulter, Crawford, Hood, and Jones.

**In the chair:** Cllr Jones (until 7.38pm) and then Cllr Cullen.

**Officers present:** Town Clerk.

**Members of the public in attendance: 0**

The public session was not required.

Meeting started at: 7.30pm.

**MINUTES**

**FR24/01: Election of Chair.**

Cllr Cullen was proposed as Chair.

**It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] [for-against-abstain] that Cllr Cullen is elected as Chair of Finance and Resources Committee for the following year.**

**FR24/02: Election of Vice Chair.**

Cllr Jones was proposed as Vice Chair.

**It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] [for-against-abstain] that Cllr Jones is elected as Vice Chair of Finance and Resources Committee for the following year.**

**FR24/03: 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 Anderton and Fradley.

**It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to accept and approve the apologies and reasons submitted.**

**FR24/04: 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 declared.

**FR24/05: [Minutes of the last meeting](#) held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).**

To agree the minutes from the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**It was RESOLVED [4-0-0] to agree that the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April are a true and accurate record of that meeting.**

**Cllr Jones signed the minutes.**

**FR24/06: Actions from the last meeting.**

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

The [clerk's report](#) for this meeting can be found on the Bruton Town Council website.

The clerk read through the report briefly. The visit to finalise the condition survey is taking place this week, and the reports will follow in due course.

Cllr Cullen arrived at 19.38 and resumed the chair.

**FR24/07: Review of Risk Register.**

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

The [Risk Register](#) can be viewed on the Bruton Town Council website, and has been previously circulated.

The clerk addressed various points, as listed below:

1a: Data and Records. To note that as a result of the recent IT upgrade, town council documents were being migrated to sharepoint, with a dedicated area where councillors can access documents.

2b: Committee Budgets. The clerk is to ensure that chairs of committees are aware that committee budgets will be reviewed at each committee meeting (notify by email).

2l: Financial Risks: The level of general reserves was a point raised by the internal auditor at the last visit in May 2024. The clerk is to produce a draft Reserves Policy, which will give the framework for the level of reserves (both earmarked and general) that are required.

3a: Governance and reputational risk: introduction of the new model financial regulations.

4c: Legal and Regulatory risks: Annual staff performance review schedule to be considered.

6d: Operational Risks: Officers are liaising with the Tree Warden, to discuss a full tree survey, with the support of Cllr Buckland.

7b: Cemetery: a condition survey of the gravestones and memorials at the churchyard was conducted in May 2024, awaiting report.

9b Playareas: The assistant clerk is now trained undertake regular routine inspections of the play area equipment.

10a Community Office, fire risk: The annual fire equipment inspection is being scheduled.

10-f Walls: the level of walls reserve will be considered as part of the reserves policy process.

Damage to a wall in Jubilee Park has been reported, to be brought to the attention of the Youth Worker.

Cllr Buckland arrived at 7.45pm during agenda item FR24/07.

**FR24/08: To review the reinstatement valuation recently commissioned.**

To discuss the reinstatement valuation received. To discuss any variation in the town council insurance premium for the current and subsequent years, as a result of obtaining the reinstatement valuation, and any next steps.

The clerk overviewed the additional premium due (£240.92) , as a result of the increase of cover due to the recent reinstatement valuation, and that this will take the insurance budget over by just under £130.

It is recommended to approve the additional cover at the increased cost.

**It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to recommend to Full Council that the additional premium of £240.92 is paid, and approve that the budget overspend to be met from general reserves.**

**FR24/09: Cemetery**

- a. To discuss a request to pre-pay for an interment.

During a recent cremated remains a request was made to pre-pay the fees for the interment that would take place into this grave space at a future time. The clerk overviewed the situation After some discussion, it was agreed that this is not a service that Bruton Town Council can offer. It was proposed to not approve the facility of pre-payment for interment fees.

**It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that a prepayment of interment fees is not a service that the town council can facilitate, and therefore any requests to pre-pay interment fees should be declined**

**FR24/10: Permission to use the Dovecote area for a light show.**

A request has been received for consideration, to project a light image onto the Dovecote, for a few weeks between end September 2024 to end February 2025 (to be confirmed) in the evening.

Further information is required before this request can be considered, for example:

- The precise date and duration.
- The full nature of what the lightshow will project.
- How would the light show be powered – a generator could create noise issues.
- How the area will be accessed and supervised.
- Has the National Trust given permission for the Dovecote to be used.

**It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that further information that covers the above questions to be obtained, and the request to be taken to Full Council for further discussion and a decision.**

**FR24/11: Financial Regulations.**

To overview the new model financial regulations received, and to tailor them to Bruton Town Council for adoption at the next appropriate Full Council meeting.

The new model financial regulations were overviewed by the committee. As these have been completely rewritten, the clerk had provided some clarity as to where the values and statements from the currently regulations applied to the new wording.

Point 6.9 iv (on page 8/9) has an amount for transfer between councils banking arrangements of £10000, which is the same in the current regulations. It is the recommendation of this committee, to Full Council, to increase this to £15,000, and to report back to the transfer to councillors at the next meeting.

This is to be recommended to Full Council at the June 2024 meeting. The final draft of the new financial regulations will be submitted to Full Council at the July 2024 meeting.

**It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to recommend to full council that the current level of funds transfers within the councils banking arrangements be increased from £10000 ([current regulation 5.5c pg 8](#)) to £15000, and any transfers reported at the following full council meeting.**

#### **FR24/12: Internal Audit**

To discuss the recommendations made during the recent Internal Audit, and decide upon next actions.

The internal audit actions were discussed. Some points were made regarding the level of general reserves and walls reserves, and the consideration of introducing a reserve for trees. These areas can be considered within a Reserves Policy (see minute item FR24/07).

The clerk is to investigate information being published directly from Sharepoint onto the town council website, to support the items required for publishing under the Transparency Code.

#### **FR24/13: Brubowl.**

To discuss the fundraising for the Brubowl project to date, and to consider the VAT implications of the project for the Town Council. To consider obtaining further advice regarding the project regarding VAT.

The clerk recommended that the position for reclaiming VAT on expenditure on the project is clarified, so that there are no surprises regarding being able to reclaim VAT under VAT126.

The Good Company is holding funds raised by the community of just over £57K so far towards the project. The Town Council is leading the Brubowl project.

A funding plan was discussed and approved at the BruBowl working group that took place on 17<sup>th</sup> June, and a draft funding application for National Lottery funding is to be submitted for full council on 25<sup>th</sup> June for consideration.

It was recommended that the clerk approaches the Somerset Association of Local Councils for initial VAT advice.

**FR24/14: To review the net position and spend to budget, and earmarked reserve reports to 31<sup>st</sup> May (if available).**

S106 funding was discussed. The clerk overviewed the earmarked reserves balances report, and also the level of general reserves.

The net position and spend to budget reports were noted.

**FR24/15: Staffing – scheduling annual reviews for all staff.**

Staff reviews are the responsibility of this committee, and they need to be scheduled in. The suggestion is that two members of this committee to be nominated to undertake staff reviews. For further discussion with the full council chair.

**FR24/16: Date of next meeting.**

The next meeting is on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024, in Bruton Community Hall, 7.30pm.

Cllr Cullen thanked the whole committee for their attendance and support.

Meeting closed at 8.39pm

**END OF MINUTES**