

**Minutes of the Town Council held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm,  
in Bruton Community Hall.**

**Councillors present:** Anderton, Baker, Bateman (until 8.12pm), Buckland, Coulter, Cullen, Dunn, Fradley, Hood, Jones, Taylor.

**In the chair:** Cllr Anderton.

**Officers present:** Town Clerk.

**Members of the public:** 1.

**Public session started:** 7.30pm

The member of the public commented that it was great to see so many town councillors attending that the fundraising event that took place recently to raise money for a cancer charity.

**Public session ended:** 7.30pm.

**Meeting started:** 7.31pm.

**MINUTES**

**24/113: Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Crawford and Robinson.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] [for-against-abstain] to accept and approve the apologies submitted and the reasons given.**

**24/114: Declarations of Interest.**

Members to declare any interests, including disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) 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.

**24/115: Minutes of the previous meeting (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).**

To receive, approve and sign [the minutes of the last Town Council meeting](#) held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 as a true and accurate record.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to receive, approve and sign the minutes from the full council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.**

Cllr Anderton signed the minutes.

**24/116: Reports from Somerset Councillors:**

- a. Cllr Tom Power: Cllr Power commented that Somerset Council Planning is still proving quite challenging.
- b. Cllr Lucy Trimnell. Cllr Trimnell gave a short oral report. There has been no update from Somerset Council regarding the waste bins. A consultation about the Local Plan ends soon, and a meeting will take place in January to discuss the responses. Somerset Rivers Authority have launched a grant funding scheme to support flood prevention measures.

After the storm and heavy rain, it is apparent that the communication of localised flooding for commuters and road users in Somerset needs to be improved.

The Planning Committee- South meeting was difficult.

Library Junction. Cllr Trimnell had been contacted by a resident regarding this junction, who voiced concerns about turning right into Coombe Street from Quaperlake street.

Cllr Jones reported that a dangerous pothole on Frome Road, previously reported, had been filled.

Cllr Buckland raised the problems with flooding at the bottom of Plox, and questioned the effectiveness of communication between Somerset Highways and the Environment Agency regarding this issue.

**24/117: Minutes and Recommendations from Committees and from those Working Groups that report to the Full Council:**

- a. Strategic Planning
  - i. To note the recommendation from the Strategic Planning meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October (which was missed at the last town council meeting) regarding the refresh of the Town Plan.  
The recommendation is to refresh the Town Plan 2017, as most of the objectives from this plan have been actioned. The aim is to have the refresh of the plan completed by May 2026.

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- ii. To ratify the terms of reference of the Town Plan working group, and to agree invites to partner organisations.  
Key stakeholders need to be engaged to refresh the Town Plan, which are reflected within the draft terms of reference. Finance and Resources Committee recommended to use the earmarked reserves for Neighbourhood Plan as funding to refresh the Town Plan.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to agree the terms of reference for the Town Plan working group.**

- b. Finance and Resources Committee. to receive the minutes from the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November (if available) and to note or approve any recommendations as required.
  - i. To note that the Internal Audit interim visit report was presented and any actions discussed.  
Noted.
  - ii. Earmarked Reserves were reviewed and the recommendations are listed for consideration. To approve the list of recommendations.  
To merge the earmarked reserves for Jubilee Park Development Programme and the Jubilee Park Play Area (sinking fund) and that the name of the earmarked reserve is Jubilee Park Play Area (sinking fund).  
To merge the earmarked reserves for County Fields with Walking/Cycling, and footpaths, and the name of the earmarked reserve is County Fields.  
Signage/finger posts (£4000), Climate Emergency (£5000), Grit Bins (£1000), Noticeboards (£1010), SALC – Reconnecting Communities (£840) and Spark-Men’s shed (£2500) to be moved to General Reserves.  
Project and Grant fund to be renamed In Year Grant Funding.  
Neighbourhood Plan to be renamed Town Plan.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] that the recommended changes as listed are made to earmarked reserves.**

- iii. To note that the [Risk Register](#) was reviewed. The Risk Register needs to be formally reviewed by full council before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.  
Noted.
- c. Planning and Consultation Response Committee.  
To note two delegated planning responses submitted to Somerset Council Planning.

Noted.

- d. Events Committee – to receive [the minutes from the meeting](#) held on 5<sup>th</sup> November and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

The Events committee to consider changing the Events Committee to a working group, for Christmas Event. Administrative tasks, such as the event management plan and the road closure application, could be delegated to officers.

A clearer purpose for the working group needs to be determined, and a proposed terms of reference to be provided at a future full council meeting for consideration.

- e. Town Committee – to receive the minutes from the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

- i. Removal of ash tree at the cemetery, Cuckoo Hill.

A large ash tree needs to be removed, due to ash dieback. Town Committee recommended that Full Council approves the proposed spend of £665 + VAT from general reserves, to remove the tree.

- ii. Defibrillator battery replacement.

The defibrillator battery in the device located at West End needs to be replaced. Town Committee recommends that Full Council approved the spend of £247 to be met from general reserves.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to approve the removal of the ash tree at the cemetery and the purchase of the replacement battery, to be funded from General Reserves.**

Cllr Jones commented on the Town Committee decision to not replace the picnic benches at this time, and to review during budget setting next year. The packhorse bridge area is a public open space that can be used by all. Any incidents of antisocial behaviour needs to be reported to the police via the recommended channels. It is important that a recommendation of this nature is discussed at full council.

The picnic benches are not being replaced due to current budget constraints, and the difficulties being faced with the budget for 2025/26. The replacement of the benches will be reconsidered during budget setting next year. This point will need to be clarified in the Town Committee minutes for that meeting.

Councillors Fradley and Taylor met with local business owners regarding the proposals for an enhancement feature at Library Junction. Some initial ideas were circulated, which included some

bespoke planters, and some sourced from reclamation yards. The proposals and provisional costings will be discussed at the next Town Committee meeting in January.

- f. Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group – to receive any updates.  
None.
- g. BruBowl Working Group. To receive any updates.

The application for National Lottery funding was rejected. The working group members are naturally disappointed and will be meeting in due course to discuss next options. The Town Clerk is to request more detailed feedback from the funding officer.

#### **24/118: Clerk's Report.**

To receive [a short report](#) from the Town Clerk to update on ongoing matters. The report has been published on the town council website.

#### **24/119: Somerset Council**

To review recommendations from the working group regarding process and timescale for consulting with residents about the proposals from Somerset Council to charge for some services, and discuss the next steps.

Further to the Finance and Resources Committee meeting last week, it is clear that it's not just the proposed changes at Somerset Council that will impact the budget for 2025/26, but also the maintenance required for Heritage Assets and walls that the town council is responsible for. The meeting is to provide an opportunity for residents to receive information and ask questions about the likely large increase in the budget and as a result, the precept.

The suggestion was the meeting to take place on the date that Events Committee was scheduled, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025, and defer the Events Committee meeting to another time (to be arranged).

It is hoped that the provisional budget will be published beforehand, along with supporting notes, which are straightforward. It is important that the picture is painted as clearly as possible, but avoiding a long list of figures.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to hold the public meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025, and defer the Events Committee meeting to an alternative date, to be arranged.**

Cllr Bateman left the meeting at 8.12pm

**24/120: Somerset Council Planning Committee – South.**

To receive oral feedback regarding the Somerset Council Planning Committee – South which considered the planning applications 19/00655/OUT Brewham Road South, and 20/02297/OUT Land North of Brewham Road, and if required, to decide upon any next steps.

The planning meeting was difficult, with many spokespeople about the 19/00655/OUT Brewham Road South planning application. This application was approved by the Planning Committee - South. The highways report commissioned by the Town Council is not yet available on the Somerset Planning Portal

Planning application 20/02297/OUT Land North of Brewham Road also had representatives speaking about the application. There was a great deal of confusion regarding the location of the proposed new doctors surgery and access and further confusion regarding the highways access. This application was deferred for a second time.

Councillors are concerned about the process followed to approve the Brewham Road South application, considering the ongoing discussions about pedestrian and cyclist safety. Bruton Town Council considers that road users have been prioritised over pedestrian and cyclists safety. A formal review of the processes followed to reach the decision to approve the planning application could be undertaken by a Judicial Review.

A notice of intention to proceed with a Judicial Review would need to be lodged within 6 weeks from the date of the planning decision (26<sup>th</sup> November 2024). There would be a cost implication for the town council to undergo the Judicial Review, plus a risk of incurring additional costs if the town council did not succeed.

An extraordinary full council meeting would be required to make the decision whether the town council undertakes a Judicial Review. The review would not stop the development going ahead, but it could ensure that pedestrian and cyclist safety is considered above road users.

It was proposed that a small group of councillors explore the Judicial Review process and the costs involved. An extraordinary full council meeting could be called if it were deemed necessary.

**It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] that Cllrs Hood, Jones and Buckland, working with the Deputy Clerk, would research and discuss the Judicial Review process, and make recommendations as required.**

### **24/121: Somerset Council**

That the Town Council requests a proportion of business rates paid in the town for capital public realm works. Cllr Jones to lead.

Cllr Jones read out a short statement and a proposal regarding the proposed campaign.

Larger Towns, e.g. Bridgwater and Glastonbury in Somerset, have benefited from Government “*Town Deals*”; more locally, South Somerset’s larger Towns, Yeovil, Chard, and Wincanton had benefited from similar SSDC ‘Deals’ – although Wincanton’s was ‘clawed back’ to Yeovil and Chard.

Bruton’s Public Spaces are becoming increasingly dilapidated; Expecting Bruton Town Council 1,000 Precept-payers to cover this shortfall is iniquitous

### **Proposal**

Bruton Town Council...

- Start a Campaign for Somerset Council to make a proportion of Business Rates available to its Market Towns, for Investment according to local priorities
- Write to the Leader and Chief Executive of Somerset Council to make this request
- Write to Sarah Dyke MP to request her support
- Obtain the support of Bruton Chamber
- Write to fellow Somerset Towns to recommend that they join our Campaign, by making similar requests of Somerset Council

Publicise via local Somerset Media, Bruton Town Council’s Website, and our Social Media channels.

It was recognised that the Market Town Investment Group (MTIG), a South Somerset District Council initiative, had provided numerous opportunities that the town council had benefitted from.

**It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to approve to start a campaign for Somerset Council to make a proportion of Business Rates available to its Market Towns.**

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Somerset Councillor Trimnell confirmed her support for this proposal.

**24/122: Bank Reconciliations.**

- a. To approve the bank reconciliations for the current and deposit accounts and credit card for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

**It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to approve the bank reconciliations for the period 1 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.**

- b. To note that Cllr Jones attended the community office to view and sign the bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.  
Noted.

**24/123: Accounts for Payment.**

- a. To approve [payments list](#) for November 2024.

**It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to approve the payments list for November 2024.**

- b. Schedule of payments for December 2024. To delegate to the clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to agree the payments in December 2024, that are to meet contractual obligations, that are within budget limits or those payments that are for services and orders agreed by Full Council or Committees at previous meetings. The list of payments made will be presented to Full Council at the January Full Council meeting.

**It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to delegate to the town clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to agree the payments in December 2024.**

**24/124: Transfer of funds between bank accounts**

- a. To note the transfer of £15,000 made by the clerk from the CCLA deposit account to the Unity Trust current account.

Noted.

- b. To request approval for a further transfer of £6000 to support the deposit paid recently regarding the zipwire installation which is due to take place early next year.

**It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to approve a further transfer of funds between bank accounts of £6000 as detailed.**

**24/125: Reports - to receive reports from:**

- a. Members representing the Council on outside bodies. None
- b. Town Councillors.

Cllr Fradley suggested that the Somerset Councillors are invited to the town council Christmas meal.

Cllr Buckland reported that a young resident would like to undertake some tidying up tasks around the town, working alongside his parent. Contact details to be provided to the clerk, to discuss a plan and insurance.

Cllr Taylor enquired about the Hoedown group, who undertake monthly weeding and tidying in the town, focusing on a different area each time, and if there was a plan of works.

Cllr Hood reported that the School Streets scheme was planned to start 13<sup>th</sup> January, and has received a notification letter. The clerk has requested copies of the communications that Somerset Council are sending residents and businesses within the area that will be affected by the scheme, and also anything sent to the wider Bruton area. There has been no response to date.

Cllr Jones has been invited to a Neighbourhood Health Service meeting, as an Local Community Network chair.

**c. Chair.**

Cllr Anderton attended the wreath laying on Remembrance Sunday, and read one of the readings in church.

**24/126: Date of the next meeting of the Full Council:** The next scheduled full council meeting is Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025, 7.30pm at the Community Hall. Agenda items to the town clerk by 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 please.

The meeting closed at 20.54

**END OF MINUTES**