

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee
Held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024, at Bruton Community Hall, 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Buckland, Coulter, Crawford, Fradley, Hood, Jones (Vice Chair), Robinson.

In the Chair: Cllr Jones.

Officers present: Town Clerk.

Members of the public: 1

The public session was not required.

The meeting started at: 7.30pm

MINUTES

FR24/29: 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 Cullen.

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

FR24/30: 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).

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared as below:

Cllr Buckland is a representative on Jubilee Park Pavilion Trust (item FR24/33 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

Cllr Coulter is a member of One Planet Bruton (item FR24/33 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

Cllr Crawford is a representative on Bruton Museum Committee (item FR24/33 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

Cllr Hood is married to a One Planet Bruton director (item FR24/33 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

Cllr Jones is a member of the Bruton Museum Committee (item FR24/33 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

FR24/31: [Minutes of the last meeting](#) held on 19th November 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).

To agree the minutes from the meeting on 19th November 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to agree the minutes of the 19th November 2024 as a true and accurate record.

The minutes were signed by Cllr Jones.

FR24/32: Staffing.

- a. To note the national pay award has been agreed for 2024/25. For all grades up to SCP 43 the agreed amount is £1290 per annum, and grades from SCP 44 to 62 are increased by 2.5%. This is with effect from 1 April 2024, and will need to be backdated. To recommend to full council that this pay rise is implemented and backdated to 1st April 2024.

The pay rise will be applied and backpay from 1st April 2024 will be paid in the December salary.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to note that the National Salary Award has been agreed. To recommend to Full Council to approve that the pay rise is applied to all council officers, and the pay rise be applied and backdated to 1 April 2024.

- b. To discuss additional hours worked by officers.

A short report has been circulated to councillors which covers additional hours worked by both the Deputy Clerk and the Town Clerk. To discuss the report and decide next steps.

The Clerk gave an oral summary of the short report, and the recommendations within. Councillors considered and discussed the amount of additional hours worked by the Deputy Clerk, listed below:

- 31 hours; a legacy from the period when a locum clerk and RFO were employed to support the town council whilst recruiting a permanent clerk/RFO.
- 16 hours; accumulated whilst dealing with planning issues pertaining to the three planning applications for large developments in Bruton.

It was recognised that the three larger planning applications have required a more detailed approach to recording decisions made by the Planning and Consultation Response Committee. There has also been extra ordinary meetings as required, which have been supported by the Deputy Clerk

After some discussion, it was proposed that the Deputy Clerk is paid for 31 hours, and takes the 16 hours as Time Off In Lieu (TOIL), to be taken before the end of the current financial year.

The Town Clerk will liaise with the Deputy Clerk regularly (suggested monthly) to monitor the level of additional hours worked, and review the situation at the end of the financial year.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-2] to pay the Deputy Clerk 31 additional hours, and for 16 hours to be taken as TOIL as proposed.

Councillors discussed the additional hours worked by the Town Clerk, accumulated as listed below:

- 54 hours; a legacy from the original start date of employment. These hours were extra time worked before the official start date of employment, that were to be taken a TOIL. The amount of hours actually worked during this time was significantly higher, these 54 hours are remaining from this period.
- 25 hours; accumulated this financial year to date, with some hours already taken as TOIL.

The Town Clerk requested to take these additional hours as TOIL and receive no payment.

It was resolved [7-0-0] that the town clerk takes the additional hours as TOIL before the end of the financial year.

It was noted that council officers can hold over 5 days of annual leave to the following year.

The Clerk recommended introducing a Time Off In Lieu policy when capacity allows.

- c. Staffing. To set the schedule for annual reviews for all staff.

The Assistant Clerk is undertaking the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification, and has 12 months to submit the final portfolio. The Clerk is meeting with the Assistant Clerk monthly (sometimes more frequently) to review progress. An annual review is due in May 2025.

A half year review for the Clerk is due around March 2025.

The Clerk will meet with the Deputy Clerk quarterly.

FR24/33: Community Grant Applications for 2025/26.

To discuss the Community Grant Applications received for 2025/26 for consideration when budget setting.

The Community Grant Applications received to date are listed below, with the amounts requested, and after discussion, the recommendation to full council to consider at the January 2025 meeting. Each grant application was considered in turn, with a proposal and a recommendation resolved.

Organisation	Amount requested	Amount proposed	resolved
Bruton Community Hall	£1000	£1000	[7-0-0]
Bruton Choral Society	£550	Nil	[7-0-0]
Bruton Library	£3000	£1500	[7-0-0]
Bruton Miniday	£200	£200	[7-0-0]
Bruton Museum	£2000	Nil	[5-0-2]
Bruton United Football Club	£1900	£1500	[7-0-0]
Citizens Advice Somerset	£997	£997	[7-0-0]
Friends of Bruton Railway	£175	£175	[7-0-0]

Organisation	Amount requested	Amount proposed	resolved
Friends of Sexeys School	£1500	NIL	[3-0-4]
Jubilee Park Pavilion Trust	£2000	£1000	[7-0-0]
One Planet Bruton	£155	£155	[7-0-0]
Promise Works	£800	£800	[7-0-0]
SSCAT Bus	£1500	£1500	[7-0-0]
Growing Space	£1100	£1100	[7-0-0]

FR24/34: To consider the Town Council budget for 2025/26, and discuss possible precept options.

The first draft of the budget for 2025/26 was considered line by line, from the point where the meeting on 19th November 2024 was concluded.

The Clerk is intending to collect all of the cost codes for the various areas covered by the Grounds Maintenance Contract under one cost centre, from the start of the next financial year. This means that the ‘Other Maintenance’ budget line has been split into two parts:

- Other Maintenance, to cover the general maintenance that occurs during the year, for example the mending of fences, extra works in the play area or Jubilee Park.
- Grounds Maintenance – Other. This covers the areas in the Grounds Maintenance Contract such as Church Bridge, Packhorse Bridge and Lower Backway areas, and Burrowfield.

Walls maintenance: Questions were raised as to why there are two budget lines for walls; maintenance and a reserve. The maintenance budget line is for in year walls maintenance, and the reserve is to make provision for the future significant maintenance expected. The walls at the church require maintenance, and it is anticipated that works will be required on the walls at Jubilee Park. It was agreed to leave both provisions as is for the time being.

Within the Services and Projects cost centre, it was agreed that following the review of Earmarked Reserves at the last meeting, changes would be made to the proposed budget amounts as listed:

- Jubilee Park Development Programme reduced to £1.
- Walking/Cycling reduced to zero.
- County Fields amended to £956, which will raise the Earmarked Reserve to £15000.

- The Clerk overviewed the reasoning behind the figures for Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme, bin emptying and gulley cleansing. These figures to remain unchanged at the moment until after the Town Meeting scheduled on 7th January 2025.
- It was also noted that the break clause for the Abbey Ponds lease is next year.

The budget is now at a stage to be referred to at the Town Meeting.

FR24/35: Date of next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 13th January 2025, in Bruton Community Hall. Agenda items to the clerk by Monday 6th January 2025 (at the latest).

Meeting closed at 8.59pm

END OF MINUTES