

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee
Held on MONDAY 13th January 2025 at 7.30pm to be held in Bruton
Community Hall.

Present: Cllrs Anderton, Buckland, Coulter, Fradley, Hood and Jones (Vice Chair).

In the Chair: Cllr Jones.

Officers Present: Town Clerk.

Members of the Public: 0

Public session started: Not required.

The meeting started at: 7.30pm.

MINUTES

FR24/36: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

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

Apologies from Councillors Robinson, Cullen and Crawford.

FR24/37: 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).

Cllr Buckland is a representative on Jubilee Park Pavilion Trust (item FR24/44 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

Cllr Coulter is a member of One Planet Bruton (item FR24/44 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

Cllr Hood is married to a One Planet Bruton director (item FR24/44 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26), and has an allotment (FR24/42a allotment fees review).

Cllr Jones is a member of the Bruton Museum Committee (item FR24/44 Community Grant Applications for 2026/26).

FR24/38: [Minutes of the last meeting](#) held on 3rd December 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).

To agree the minutes from the meeting on 3rd December 2024 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

It was RESOLVED [6-0-0] [for-against-abstain] to approve the minutes from the meeting on 3rd December 2024 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

FR24/39: Reserves Policy.

To consider a draft Reserves Policy.

The draft Reserves Policy as circulated was discussed, and the level for general reserves was discussed. For a council of the size of Bruton Town Council, the general reserves should be nearer to three months of general monthly expenditure, but no higher than 25% of the precept.

Councillors debated that an aspirational target of moving towards general reserves being at a level of 50% of precept within three years was not appropriate. It was felt that the review of earmarked reserves has been sufficient during this budget setting process.

It was proposed and RESOLVED [4-2-0] to remove the phrase in point 2.3, page 1, 'the council has an aspirational target of reaching 50% of net revenue expenditure over the next three years', and once removed, to recommend to full council that the Reserves Policy be adopted.

FR24/40: Risk Register.

To review the town council Risk Register.

The Risk Register was discussed, and the comments made by the clerk noted.

FR24/41: Investment Policy.

To review the town council Investment Policy.

It was RESOLVED [6-0-0] to review the Investment Policy with no changes. To recommend that Full Council note that this committee has reviewed the Investment Policy.

FR24/42: To review fees and charges

- a. Allotment fees.

The allotment fees were reviewed.

It was RESOLVED [6-0-0] that there is no change to the current level of allotment fees.

- b. Cemetery fees.

The cemetery fees were discussed.

It was RESOLVED [6-0-0] that there is no change to the current level of cemetery fees.

FR24/43: to consider additional software solutions to support meeting preparation and governance.

A quote has been received for software solutions to support administration, meeting preparation and governance, to reduce administration time preparing for meeting and monitoring workloads, based upon Artificial Intelligence. To consider a budget provision to implement the software (or similar).

The software was discussed with a variety of opinion. In order for a software solution of this nature to be considered, there needs to be a budget provision. Councillors had various questions, including if there is a free trial.

A budget amount was provisionally agreed, with a view to considering multiple providers of similar solutions in the new financial year.

FR24/44: Community Grant Applications for 2025/26.

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

The following grant applications were received, and considered, with subsequent recommendations to full council to be ratified as part of the budget setting process:

Organisation	Amount requested	Amount agreed	Any comments
Bruton Choral Society	£500	NIL	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
Bruton Community Hall	£1000	£1000	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
Bruton Library	£3000	£1500	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
Bruton Mini Day	£200	£200	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
Bruton Museum	£2000	NIL	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
BUFC	£1900	£1500	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
Citizens Advice	£997	£997	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed
Friends of Bruton Railway Station	£175	£175	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed
Friends of Sexeys School	£1500	NIL	Grant application from 24/25 budget discussion. Resolved [6-0-0] NIL.
Jubilee Park Pavilion	£2000	£1000	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed.
One Planet Bruton	£155	£155	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed
Promise Works	£800	£800	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed
SSCAT	£1750	£1750	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed
The Growing Space	£1100	£1100	Resolved [6-0-0] agreed
Total grant amount	£17127	£10177	Resolved [6-0-0] budget recommendation agreed.

FR24/45: To consider the Town Council budget for 2025/26, and discuss possible precept options.

- a. To finalise the draft budget for 2025/26, and make recommendations to full council.

The draft budget that had been previously circulated was discussed, and viewed line by line.

The agreed amendments are:

- The amount considered for addressing gravestones and memorials in the closed churchyard to be reduced to £7500. **RESOLVED [6-0-0]**
- The Engine Shed was discussed. Scaffolding contractors are to be approached independently to understand the complex requirements, and a likely cost involved. The amount to remain unchanged at £25,000. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Car park sinking fund. Remove this budget line, car park maintenance is to be included within the 'other maintenance' budget line. To be reconsidered again next year. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Remove tree maintenance reserve line. Tree maintenance is to be facilitated by an in year budget allocation. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**

- Christmas trees were discussed. The proposal was to continue with the large Christmas tree on Crown Green but not to continue with the small trees along the High Street. Suggestions were to approach local businesses for donations, or to consider matched funding if another organisation took the lead with organising the trees. Reduce the proposed budget to £500. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- An additional budget line for new software was introduced, at £2000. This is to consider administrative support software. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Website supporting software needs to be renewed next year, estimated annual cost is £300. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Walls maintenance in year budget line was reduced to zero, as the walls reserve is set at £10000. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Abbey Ponds Development was reduced to £2000. It is hoped to supplement this amount with a grant funding application, in order to support additional maintenance on the hoggin footpath. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Gulley Emptying was discussed at length. The original amount was reduced to £1500. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- Elections budget line reduced to zero. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
- The General Reserve top up to 25% of the Revenue Budget will be calculated once the other budget items have been agreed. **RESOLVED [6-0-0].**
Once these adjustments are made, the resulting budget is the recommended budget to be to full council for consideration.
- b. To agree a recommendation for full council to consider to set the precept demand for 2025/26.
The precept demand will be discussed at full council, once the suggested budget is discussed and agreed.

FR24/46: Date of next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 15th April 2025, in Bruton Community Hall.

Agenda items to the clerk by 4th April please.

Meeting closed 9pm.

END OF MINUTES