

**Minutes of the Town Council held on Tuesday 25th February 2025 at
7.30pm, in Bruton Community Hall**

Councillors present: Cllrs Anderton, Baker, Coulter, Hood and Jones.

In the Chair: Cllr Anderton.

Officers present: Assistant Town Clerk (ATC) and Deputy Clerk (DTC).

Somerset Councillors present: Cllr T Power.

Members of the public: 12, including the Chair of the East Somerset Federation.

Public session started at: 7:30pm.

Public session ended at: 7.39pm.

Meeting started at: 7:39pm.

MINUTES

24/145: Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Received from Cllrs Bateman, Crawford, Dunn, Fradley, Robinson and Taylor.

24/146: 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).

Councillor Coulter declared an interest in item 24/152 as a King's School employee.

24/147: 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 21st January 2025 as a true and accurate record.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] [for-against-abstain] that the minutes of the last Town Council meeting held on 21st January are a true and accurate record of that meeting.

24/148: Reports from Somerset Councillors:

An eight-page report by Somerset Councillors Lucy Trimmell and Tom Power had been circulated before the meeting. Cllr. Power explained the timetable for Somerset Council's budget setting process before answering questions relating to flooding provision and §19 educational provision.

24/149: Councillor Resignation

It was noted that Cllr Cullen had resigned, and that a casual vacancy notice has been published. His position will be filled by election if ten or more electors request this by 3rd March, or otherwise by co-option.

24/150: Minutes and Recommendations from Committees and from those Working Groups that report to the Full Council:

a. Town Committee.

To receive the [minutes from the meeting](#) held on 28th January 2025, and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

i Agenda item T24/83 Bench Installation on the Dovecote.

The installation of the bench (permitted development) was approved by Town Committee subject to suitable budget being available from the 2024/25 budget. The Town Clerk identified two budget areas: MUGA and Skatepark, floodlight maintenance £321; and Cemetery, bench maintenance, £53.50.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to approve the use of these budget lines to support the £350 cost to install the bench.

b. Planning and Consultation Response Committee.

To receive [the minutes from the meeting held on 5th February](#) and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

i Recommendation of amendment to Parking order: Mill Lane/Lower Backway.

It was noted that some residents had submitted objections to the proposal (instigated by the Town Council) to install double yellow lines at the corner of Mill Lane and Lower Backway, and that the Traffic Regulation Order consultation period ended on 20th January.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that the Council is content to let Somerset Highways judge the merits of the proposal.

c. Events Committee.

To receive the minutes from the meeting held on 11th February 2025, and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

- i To cancel the scheduled meeting on 4th March as it is no longer required, and to have the next meeting on 6th May 2025.

Noted.

- ii For the Events Committee to be reconstituted as a Working Group.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that the Events Committee be reconstituted as a Working Group, and that the previously circulated Draft Terms of Reference be adopted.

d. Strategic Planning Committee.

To receive the [minutes from the meeting held on 18th February 2025](#) and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that Cllrs. Buckland and Taylor join the Committee and that the Committee's Terms of Reference be adjusted accordingly.

e. Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group.

The Working Group met on 3rd February 2025. Group – to receive any updates and recommendations.

The Council received the draft One Planet Bruton Action Plan, noting that it represents a provisional rather than settled view of the actions required. It was suggested that the Action Plan might benefit from a reduction in political comment and greater clarity about street lighting.

f. BruBowl Working Group.

The Working Group met on 17th February 2025. To receive any updates and recommendations.

- i To note that further funding streams are being considered. The Working Group wish to apply for grant funding with Sport England, and other grant awarding organisations. To delegate grant funding applications for BruBowl to town council officers, working with Working Group members.

It was noted that much progress has been made, with c.£90k. of funds raised and planning permission granted, but the National Lottery's rejection of a £100k. funding bid on the grounds that Bruton is a wealthy community represents a setback.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that funding applications be delegated to council officers in consultation with the working group, and that more modest grants be sought from Sport England and other funding organisations.

- ii To consider which Bruton Town Councillors to be members of the BruBowl Working Group, to support quorate meetings.

Deferred.

g. Footpaths Working Group.

To consider the recommendation that the working group ceases to exist.

Councillors commended the Working Group for its achievements, most notably building the excellent Bruton Walks website, but they acknowledged that requiring Working Group members to meet regularly and to lobby Somerset Council constantly imposed a considerable and possibly unnecessary burden on them. It was agreed that in future the local footpath network could be effectively monitored by regular but informal conversations between interested parties, with necessary actions undertaken on an ad hoc basis.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that the Footpaths Working Group be dissolved.

24/151: 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. **Noted.**

At this point Cllr. Coulter left the meeting.

24/152: Bruton School for Girls.

To consider additional correspondence from the Charity Commission. To consider whether a further response is required from the town council, as invited by the Charity Commission (to be submitted by 7th March 2025), and if so, what that response should be.

It was pointed out that because of the unavoidable absence of several councillors, through illness or other commitments, the meeting was barely quorate, and when one of the councillors present had left the meeting avoid a conflict of interest it became inquorate. The Chair therefore declared the sitting suspended so that the matter could be discussed informally and information exchanged with interested members of the public including the Chair of the East Somerset Federation (of schools). Following the informal discussion the Chair decided that the matter should be deferred for formal discussion and decision at an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council. This would have to be heard before the Charity Commission's response deadline of 7th March.

At this point Cllr. Coulter returned to the meeting.

24/153: Bruton Town Council Planning Policy To consider updating the [Town Council Planning Policy](#)

It was noted that the Town Clerk hoped to arrange a meeting with the Planning & Development Manager at Frome Town Council who had valuable experience in policy development and might be able to give practical advice on how to create a more useful and user-friendly planning policy for Bruton.

24/154: Annual Town Forum.

To set the date for the Annual Town Forum for 2025.

It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would consult with individual councillors and determine the most suitable of several possible dates.

24/155: Additional hours for staff

The clerk is on annual leave for just under 5 weeks in April and May 2025.

- a.** To agree additional hours for the Assistant Clerk, of one extra 7-hour day per week for 5 weeks during this period.
- b.** To agree additional hours for the Deputy Clerk to support committee meetings and full council meetings during this period.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to authorise the extra hours as proposed.

24/156: Annual Leave

To agree to the carrying forward of up to one week of annual leave, for all staff, if not taken by 31st March 2025. Leave carried forward must be taken within the first quarter of the new financial year.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to authorise the carrying forward of leave as proposed.

24/157: Station Road Car Park Annual Rent.

The rent review for 2025/26 has been received. To note that it has been received and is correct.

Noted.

24/158: Bank Reconciliations.

- a.** To approve the bank reconciliations for the current and deposit accounts and credit card for the period 1st January to 31st January 2025.
- b.** To note that Cllr Crawford attended the office on 13th February 2025 to view and sign the bank reconciliations 1st January to 31st January 2025.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to approve the bank reconciliations for all town council bank accounts as listed above, and to note that Cllr Crawford attended the community office to view and sign the reconciliations.

24/159: To receive the spend to budget to 31st January 2025.

To note the spend to budget to 31st January 2025 as circulated.

Noted.

24/160: Accounts for Payment.

To approve [payments list](#) for February 2025, which includes those additional payments made in January, after the full council meeting on 21st January 2025.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to approve the payments lists for the last ten days of January 2025 and for February 2025, as detailed above.

24/161: Transfer of funds between bank accounts

- a. To note the transfer of £15,000 to be made in February to meet the February 2025 payments.

Noted

- b. To approve a transfer of additional funds from CCLA deposit account to Unity Trust Current account to pay the barrister for advice over seeking judicial review (£6,000).

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] to approve the transfer of funds between the Council's accounts as detailed above.

24/162: Reports - to receive reports from:

- a. Members representing the Council on outside bodies.
Cllr. Anderton reported on a meeting in which interesting questions were raised about the use of volunteers for minor work relating to highways, for example the cleaning of road signs.
- b. Town Councillors.
Cllr. Baker appealed for letters of support from our Local Community Network to help raise funds for the refurbishment of the shower room in the pavilion and the resurfacing of pitches.
- c. Chair.
Cllr. Anderton reported on a meeting with the Bishop of Bath & Wells.

24/163: Date of the next meeting of the Full Council: The next full council meeting is Tuesday 25th March 2025, 7.30pm at the Community Hall. Agenda items to the clerk for consideration by Friday 14th March 2025.

24/164: Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider the exclusion of press and public for the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2), on the grounds that discussion of agenda item 24/165 is legally sensitive.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because some of the matters to be discussed under Agenda Item 24/165 are legally confidential.

24/165: Judicial Review in respect of 19/00655/OUT Land at Brewham Road.

To consider advice on whether to apply for judicial review of Somerset Council's recent decision to approve this Planning application, and to decide on the next steps. Members discussed the legal advice received from a specialist Planning barrister and considered the alternative options set out.

It was RESOLVED [5-0-0] that the Council expressed thanks for the clear and useful advice received from the Planning barrister, that in the light of that advice it would not be in the community's best interests for the Council to seek Judicial Review, and that the Council would continue to urge the housing developer, the Highways Authority and the Planning Authority to make provision for safer pedestrian access to and from the proposed development site.

The meeting ended at 9.11pm.

END OF MINUTES