

**Minutes of the TOWN COUNCIL meeting held on Tuesday 25th March
2025 at 7.30pm in the Community Hall.**

Councillors present: Councillors Baker, Bateman, Buckland, Coulter, Crawford, Dunn, Hood, Jones, Robinson.

In the Chair: Councillor Hood.

Officers present: Town Clerk.

Members of the public: 2 ,(plus 2 arrived later) and Somerset Councillor Trimnell.

Public Session started at: 7.30pm.

Public Session ended at: 7.30pm.

Meeting started at: 7.30pm.

MINUTES

24/169: Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Apologies were received from Councillors Anderton and Fradley.

It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] [for-against-abstain] to accept and approve the apologies submitted and the reasons given.

24/170: 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.

24/171: 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 25th February 2025, and the [minutes of the extra ordinary meeting](#) of the Town Council held on 4th March 2025, as a true and accurate record.

It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to receive, approve and sign the minutes of the full council meeting on 25th February 2025 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

It was RESOLVED [9-0-0] to receive, approve and sign the minutes of the extra ordinary full council meeting on 4th March 2025 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

Councillor Hood signed both sets of minutes.

24/172: Reports from Somerset Councillors:

- a. Lucy Trimnell gave a short oral report. A schedule of road maintenance for the coming year in Somerset has been published by Somerset Council Highways, but there has been no maintenance listed on the schedule for Bruton. Cllr Trimnell will be writing to Highways to request that the roads in Bruton parish, (and the wider Ward area) are considered carefully, so as to benefit from additional Central Government funding when it becomes available. Councillor Trimnell requested that councillors/officers write to her with any specific roads in Bruton that require attention.
- b. Tom Power sent apologies. A monthly newsletter had been received and circulated to councillors.

24/173: Casual Vacancy

To consider any applications received to fill the recent casual vacancy by co-option. The declaration of office is to be signed by the successful candidate, subject to an application being received, and the applicant being present.

One application to fill the casual vacancy has been received. The applicant had attended the meeting, and gave a short personal statement.

It was proposed and RESOLVED [9-0-0] that Richard Wright is co-opted onto Bruton Town Council to fill the current casual vacancy.

The Declaration of Acceptance of office was signed by the successful candidate, who joined the meeting as a councillor.

24/174: 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 18th March 2025 (if available), and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

- i. Clerk to contact officers at Somerset Council to discuss the S106 funding. The S106 funds to include onsite and offsite play areas, allowing the opportunity to upgrade current play areas rather than creating more play areas if possible.

The clerk submitted a report to Town Committee, as requested by Strategic Planning Committee, which provided this information. The matter now needs to be referred back to Strategic Planning Committee, in order to discuss the way forward to consider play area provision in Bruton.

- ii. To apply for the higher level tier of Countryside Stewardship for the Abbey Ponds area and the Dovecote fields area to enable more funding opportunities for maintenance needs once the higher tier option becomes available.

This proposal is to address the areas that the town council are responsible for. It was proposed to apply for the Higher Level tier of Countryside Stewardship, when the scheme is open for applications.

It was resolved [9-0-1] to apply for the Higher Level tier of Countryside Stewardship for Abbey Ponds and Dovecote fields, when the scheme is open for applications.

- iii. To form a separate grounds maintenance schedule and contract for the Abbey Ponds area.

The clerk gave a short oral overview as to why Abbey Ponds maintenance should be addressed separately from the general grounds maintenance contract, when the contract is reviewed later this year. Two of the volunteers from the Working Group have been leading on wildlife and conservation, and scrub clearance, and it is felt that a holistic approach to the whole area as a separate entity would be of benefit.

It was proposed , and RESOLVED [9-0-1] when the grounds maintenance contract is reviewed that the Abbey Ponds is considered as a separate area, and not as part of the main contract.

- iv. Town Clerk to write a letter in support of the Bruton United Football Club (BUFC) grant funding application, on behalf of the Town Council. There are two elements to the BUFC proposed improvements at Jubilee Park. The Pavilion element is concentrating on refurbishment of the showers in the changing rooms. Significant work to improve the pitches is also planned. Councillors agreed that a letter of support can be provided.

- v. To approve the quote from the water supplier as recommended by the clerk.

A quote has been received for the water supply, from an alternative provider (Everflow), which is comparable to the current usage of the cemetery and allotment sites. The quote is fixed for three years.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to switch from the current water supplier to the new supplier, Everflow.

- vi. To re-schedule the next meeting on 20th May due to so many Cllrs being unavailable.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to change the date of the next meeting to 3rd June 2025.

b. Planning and Consultation Response Committee.

To receive [the minutes from the meeting](#) held on 12th March and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.

Since the Weight Restriction Order exemption permit system has become inoperative (because Somerset Council no longer issues permits and Bruton Town Council has no legal authority to do so), and since the Police evidently lack the manpower to enforce Bruton's Weight Restriction Order, the Committee recommends the Town Council to:

- i. ask Somerset Council to remove references to the non-existent permit system from its website because they only serve to confuse hauliers, contractors and members of the public;

It was proposed and RESOLVED [10-0-0] to write to Somerset Council Highways as detailed above.

- ii. ask the Highways Authority and the Police to investigate whether alternative techniques like linked ANPR cameras could provide a more cost-effective means of enforcing and reinforcing the Weight Restriction Order;

Cllr Jones provided a short overview of the reasoning behind this action. Other methods of monitoring the HGV traffic were discussed, but it was felt that ANPR would not be an effective solution.

This recommendation was not proposed therefore a vote was not required.

- iii. ask the Highways and Planning Authorities to ensure that emerging traffic management plans associated with the proposed residential developments along the Brewham Road and the south side of Cuckoo Hill will require all HGV construction traffic to access the sites via the Frome Road (the A359 north of Bruton), avoiding Bruton Town Centre. There is an opportunity to address HGV access through the planning process. It was recommended to address this when an Reserved Matters planning application is received at the town council.
- c. Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group.
To receive any updates and recommendations.
A draft One Planet Action Plan for Bruton was presented at February full council, and comments are welcomed from councillors. The plan will be discussed at the next meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group scheduled for 7th April. The plan will be brought back to the April full council meeting to be adopted.
- d. BruBowl Working Group.
To receive any updates and recommendations.
 - i. To consider which Bruton Town Councillors are to be members of the BruBowl Working Group, to support quorate meetings (deferred from February 2025 full council meeting).

The next BruBowl Working Group meeting is on 7th April. The meetings usually take place at 6pm in the evening. Councillors are needed on the working group that can attend the meetings when the meetings are held to ensure that the meetings are quorate. Councillor Jones gave a short overview of the current status of the fundraising. Councillors Crawford and Wright agreed to be appointed members of the BruBowl Working Group.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] that Councillors Crawford and Wright are members of the BruBowl Working Group.

- e. Bruton Town Plan Working Group.
The first meeting of the Bruton Town Plan Working Group took place recently, with the following recommendations:
 - i. To amend the Terms of Reference for the working group to increase the number of councillors from up to three councillors to up to four councillors.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to increase the number of councillors in the Terms of Reference from three to four.

- ii. Working Group members to be agreed: Councillors Buckland, Dunn, Jones and Taylor; Good Company Directors David Weston and Alison

Weir; Bruton Chamber members Charlotte Evans and Mark Ruthven;
One Planet Bruton members Jane Durney and Dee Mullis.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] that the core membership of the Bruton Town Plan Working Group be as listed above.

24/175: Clerk's Report.

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

24/176: Utilities works in 2025 requiring road closures

Communication has been received from Wales and West Utilities, regarding works to take place in Bruton to replace gas mains, in the later part of 2025. To discuss how best to engage with the Utilities company.

The plan supplied by Wales and West Utilities was discussed at length. Councillors asked if there was a chance of having significant resurfacing of roads in problematic areas that are within the area of these proposed works. There are likely to be two full road closures. Experience from previous utilities works is that the proposed works generally take much longer in practice than is anticipated.

The town council should try to avoid being in the middle with regards to communications between the utility company and residents, but to support with providing a platform (website, and the community office) to signpost residents who wish to seek further information. Wales and West Utilities need to include Chamber of Commerce in their communications.

It is recognised that there is never a good time for works of this magnitude to take place, but summer is difficult for businesses and residents.

The Clerk and officers are to approach the Wales and West Utilities to discuss the proposed works further.

24/177: Risk Register.

To review and agree the [Risk Register](#), as reviewed in Finance and Resources Committee in January 2025.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-3] to review and agree the Risk Register as circulated.

24/178: Asset Register.

To review and agree the Fixed Asset Register for the 2024/25 accounting period. The asset register circulated by the clerk, included the replacement/repair of the bridge in Berkeley Gardens. Some discussion took place, debating whether the bridge was the property of the town council or not.

It was proposed that the bridge in Berkeley Gardens is to be included in the Fixed Asset Register, as the town council repaired the bridge in May 2024, at a significant cost.

It was RESOLVED [3-7-0] AGAINST this proposal. This entry on the Fixed Asset Register is not to be included.

It was proposed and RESOLVED [10-0-0] that the Fixed Asset Register is agreed but with the Berkeley Gardens bridge entry removed.

24/179: Bank Reconciliations.

- a. To approve [the bank reconciliations](#) for the current and deposit accounts and credit card for the period 1st February to 28th February 2025.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to agree the bank reconciliation as presented for the period 1st to 28th February 2025.

24/180: Accounts for Payment.

- a. To approve [payments list](#) for March 2025.

It was RESOLVED [10-0-0] to agree the payments list for March 2025 as circulated.

24/181: Transfer of funds between bank accounts

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

Noted.

24/182: Reports:

To receive reports from: Members representing the Council on outside bodies, Town Councillors; and the Chair.

Councillor Buckland confirmed that there is a new headteacher at Sexeys School.

Councillor Crawford went to a leaflet exchange at Yeovil and provided an oral report of the morning.

Councillor Jones met with the Natural Flood Management Advisor from Somerset Rivers Authority recently and discussed local flood management. Councillor Jones has been speaking with the Chair of the Community Hall committee, and is supporting with signposting for fund raising due to challenges accessing S106 funding (looking at an upgrade programme rather than a maintenance regime).

Councillor Dunn presented an enquiry raised from a recent PCC meeting, regarding managing events taking place in Bruton listed in the diary in the community office, and how to improve the current system. Councillors confirmed that the Bruton Town website can be used.

Councillor Coulter queried whether there is a better way to organise the parking when there is a large event on at the church in Bruton.

Councillor Hood has also had similar discussions as Councillor Jones, with the Chair of the Community Hall committee, and has made some suggestions about how to move forward with fund raising. Councillor Hood, along with Councillor Jones, met recently with a parent from Sunny Hill Nursery, and may be offering some advice to support them.

24/183: Date of the next meeting of the Full Council: The next full council meeting is Tuesday 29th April 2025, 7.30pm at the Community Hall.

Agenda items to the clerk for consideration by Friday 18th April 2025.

Meeting closed at 8.43pm.

END OF MINUTES