

**Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee ‘FUTURE BRUTON’ meeting,
Tuesday 15th July 2025, Bruton Community Hall**

Present: Cllrs Buckland, Coulter, Fradley, Hood, Jones, Robinson

In the Chair: Cllr Coulter (for item 25/1), Cllr Robinson (from item 25/2, onwards).

Officers present: Deputy Clerk.

MINUTES

SP25/01: Election of Chair.

It was RESOLVED 6-0-0 [For-against-abstain] that Cllr Robinson be elected Chair. Cllr Robinson duly took the Chair.

SP25/02: Election of Vice Chair

It was RESOLVED 6-0-0 this be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

SP25/03: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Apologies were received from Brian Mullis and Councillors Anderton and Bateman.

SP25/04: 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).

No interests were declared.

SP25/05: Minutes from the last meeting.

To agree the minutes from the last meeting, on 22nd April 2025, as a true and accurate record.

It was RESOLVED 6-0-0 to accept the minutes of the meeting on 22nd April 2025 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

SP25/06: Bruton Town Plan.

To receive an update regarding the Town Plan Review. To discuss and decide upon next actions.

Cllr Jones reported that the consultation was due to close on July 21st and that Bruton Chamber of Commerce had made a very useful contribution. The long list of questions compiled is being edited and divided into separate themes, including Health & Wellbeing, and Nature, Climate and the Ecological Emergency, and possibly 'bolt on' surveys dealing with young people, agricultural land, and possibly other matters. A refined list of questions and draft survey will be presented for approval at the Full Council meeting in September. The Town Plan Working Group would appreciate officer support, especially in document management.

SP25/07: Strategic Plan: Appearance of the Town.

To discuss a short report overviewing a Town Ranger position for Bruton Town, if available.

Members acknowledged the benefits of having a Town Ranger, a responsible person able to undertake a wide range of repair and maintenance jobs within the town and parish, both proactively and at the instigation or direction of Council officers. The work would be complementary to that covered by the Council's Ground Maintenance contract, so in order to avoid possible overlap or confusion it is important to agree the fine detail of the Grounds Maintenance contract before attempting to define the remit of the Town Ranger. In principle the Committee would recommend engaging an independent contractor rather than taking on another member of staff, but this could change, depending on availability and other considerations.

It was RESOLVED 6-0-0 that:

- i. the Town Clerk be asked to produce a breakdown of past spending on the kind of maintenance and repairs jobs that a Town Ranger might undertake, i.e. additional to those covered by the existing grounds maintenance contract;**
- ii. the engagement of a Town Ranger be recommended to the Full Council, ideally an independent contractor rather than an employed member of staff;**

- iii. the Town Council respond to Somerset Council's forthcoming consultation on engagement with local communities by highlighting areas where closer engagement on areas like emptying bins could help to improve the appearance of the town.**

SP25/08: Strategic Plan: Safe and Active Travel (walking and cycling).

To receive and discuss a short report summarising a meeting of the Town Clerk and an officer of the Cross Active Travel LCN (Local Community Network) Steering Group, regarding any progress with the field area referred to as 'County Fields'.

It was reported that Somerset Council (SC) had engaged a new Estates manager. It was agreed that the advantages and costs of either purchasing or leasing SC land be explored, along with the possibility of SC making the land over to the Town Council without payment (apart from legal costs), as has been done in at least two other local parishes. It was noted that the section §106 agreement for a proposed housing development includes £50k. towards the provision of a pedestrian link to the town centre.

SP25/09: Flood/Resilience Action Plan.

The Committee was pleased to hear that Cllr Dunn has agreed to take on the role of Parish Flood Warden.

SP25/10: Date of next meeting. Tuesday 21st October 2025, 7.30pm (to be confirmed), to be held in the Community Hall.

The meeting finished at 8.11pm