

**Minutes of the Town Council held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 7.30pm at the Community Hall**

**Councillors present:** Anderton, Baker, Bateman, Buckland, Crawford, Dunn, Fradley, Hood, Jones, Robinson and Wright.

**In the Chair:** Cllr Buckland.

**Officer present:** Town Clerk.

Somerset Councillor in attendance, Cllr Trimmell, with apologies from Cllr Power.

**Members of the public: 0.**

**The Public Session was not required.**

**Meeting started: 7.30pm.**

**MINUTES**

**25/045: Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Coulter and Taylor.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] [for-against-abstain] to receive, accept and approve the apologies submitted and the reasons given.**

**25/046: 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.**

**25/047: 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 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Town Council Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to receive, approve and sign the minutes of the town council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.**

The minutes were signed by Cllr Buckland.

**25/048: Reports from Somerset Councillors:**

- a. Lucy Trimnell provided a short oral report:
  - reminding councillors about the Somerset Council Transport Consultation.
  - There is a crisis in the Planning department at Somerset Council. Measures are being followed that include a single email address for all councillors to contact the council about planning; it is not possible to contact individual planning officers. Enforcement is ceased for the next three months. Applications that are already out of timescales will not be progressed as the focus will be to manage new planning applications received. Once the management of new applications is improved, the department can then focus on older applications. Recruitment of new staff and retention of existing employees is difficult. It is unclear as to whether this situation will continue in the longer term.
  - Somerset Council is in the middle of a transformation process, which is the restructuring required to make over £100million savings in the budget next year.
  - Drains in Bruton. Cllr Trimnell has raised concerns about drains in Bruton with Somerset Council, requesting some pre-winter clearance of drains to avoid possible flooding in a number of key areas were discussed. The response from Somerset Council was not favourable. Councillors discussed the possibility of volunteers undertaking gulley and drain clearance (surface clearance of vegetation and debris), and how that could work. Cllr Trimnell will contact Somerset Council to convey disappointment at the response received, and for Somerset Council to consider further drain and gulley clearance.
- b. Tom Power sent apologies.

**25/049: Minutes and Recommendations from Committees and from those Working Groups that report to the Full Council:**

- a. Planning and Consultation Response Committee – to receive [the minutes from the meeting](#) held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025, and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025.  
Cllr Fradley overviewed the last two meetings.

- b. Strategic Planning Committee – to receive [the minutes from the meeting](#) held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025, and to note and approve any recommendations and decisions as required.
- i. A short report was discussed regarding a Town Ranger/Lengthsman position. That the town clerk produces a breakdown of past spending on the kind of maintenance and repair jobs that this position may undertake.
- Cllr Robinson reported that there was a good conversation regarding a Town Ranger, and this is to be considered in the budget for next year. The working title of the position to be Ranger, instead of Lengthsman. Proactive tasks in addition to the reactive tasks are to be considered for a list of possible tasks. The clerk will produce the list of additional maintenance undertaken this year, as requested, for the next Strategic Planning meeting. The list is to provide an overview of the additional maintenance tasks that have been instructed that could be facilitated by the Ranger.
- ii. The engagement of a Town Ranger be recommended in principle, ideally an independent contractor rather than an employed member of staff.
- To consider a contractor would reduce oncosts, and make the situation less complicated.
- 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.
- The clerk has already responded with an overview of the engagement with Somerset Council regarding the changes in bin emptying.
- c. Town Committee – [to receive the minutes](#) from the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 (if available), and to note or approve any recommendations and decisions as required.
- i. To name the ‘Man on a Bench’ area as ‘Bishton Green’, with a sign on the Packhorse Bridge wall (to be confirmed). That the town council funds the purchase and installation of the sign, and that Somerset Council are informed of the change of name. A bench donated by the family is also to be installed.
- Cllr Buckland overviewed reasons why to name the area Bishton Green. A short overview of John Bishton’s contribution to Bruton and the conservation area status (amongst other achievements) for those present.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to agree the recommendation from Town Committee as detailed in agenda item 25/049ci, to rename the area as Bishton Green etc.**

- ii. To recommend the trial (for six months) of an organic spray herbicide, at the Dovecote Car park (top car park). This requires lifting the 'no spray' ban for this purpose.

Cllr Buckland overviewed the benefits of using an organic herbicide at the Dovecote car park. The car park is difficult to keep weed free as small stones are a danger, when strimming. This car park is away from the main area of Jubilee Park, and the results from using the herbicide should be straightforward to gauge.

Using a herbicide for a six month trial period is to be communicated to residents via the Chair report in The Dove. A notice will also be erected in the vicinity.

**It was RESOLVED [9-0-2] to use the organic herbicide at the Dovecote car park and review the impact after six months.**

- iii. Abbey Ponds: that information boards are situated in location 1 and 5, on the supplied map, and any additional information boards to be outside of the scheduled area.

The proposed locations for information boards were discussed. There was additional information as a result of a meeting with the information board designer, on 28<sup>th</sup> July, that had not been available for the Town Committee meeting. It is important to have the correct directional signage installed.

Further information is required. It was proposed to ensure that more detailed information, and recommendations about directional signage, to be available at a future meeting, hopefully the September full council meeting.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to defer the discussion about information board locations, and directional signage, until further information is available.**

- d. Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group (CEEWG) – to receive an [update from the last meeting](#) (9<sup>th</sup> July 2025), and consider the following recommendations:

Some detailed discussions have taken place about the grounds maintenance review. It is suggested for members of CEEWG and Town Committee to walk around the areas to be maintained, together, perhaps two members from each, to be arranged.

Town Council Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025

- i. To initiate discussions with Kings School about alignment of their grounds maintenance arrangements with the One Planet Action Plan for Bruton.

This is an ideal opportunity to improve relations with Kings; to raise the profile of the One Planet Action Plan, and asking how Kings could engage with it, if they wished to.

**It was resolved [11-0-0] that the One Planet Action Plan is highlighted to Kings, and to invite them to engage with elements of the plan if they wish.**

- ii. To initiate similar discussions with St Mary's Bruton and invite them to engage with Somerset Wildlife's 'Wilder Churches' initiative.

It was agreed to take a similar approach as with Kings. To raise the profile of 'Wilder Churches' and invite engagement, in a similar way with Kings and the One Planet Action Plan.

- iii. To request that the Dovecote field is not grazed until July.

The Dovecote field slope, that faces Jubilee Park, is rich with a large variety of flowers, that would be more visible if the field was grazed later in the year. The clerk to work with the CEEWG group to obtain more information as to how the grazing could take place later, and present solutions to councillors for consideration.

- e. BruBowl Working Group – to receive an update from the working group.

- The next Working Group meeting is on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August, and will be held at the Community Office at 6pm.
- The aim is to review the fund raising. Letters have been sent to local business requesting donations, which has resulted in some feedback, to be considered.
- The recent grant application submitted to the Rural England Prosperity Fund was unsuccessful.

#### **25/050: Clerk's Report.**

To receive [a short report from the Town Clerk](#) to update on ongoing matters.

The report was overviewed for councillors. The summary of the recent youth provision review was discussed briefly.

#### **25/051: Quote for emptying bins, from Somerset Council.**

To discuss the updated quote received from Somerset Council for the emptying of bins, and decide upon the next steps.

An updated quote has been received from Somerset Council.

Town Council Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to accept the quote for bin emptying, as received and circulated.**

**25/052: Twinning Bruton.**

A request has been received to consider the twinning of Bruton with Williamsburg, Virginia, USA. To discuss the request and consider next steps.

The links of Bruton and Williamsburg were discussed. The pros and cons of twinning were also considered, and that a 'from the ground up' approach was required, rather than be led by the council.

Twinning Bruton has been considered previously, about 12 years ago, and the process and costs were considered at that time as well.

Concerns of possible links with colonialism were raised, and a discussion took place as to how could that be managed. There could be public relations issues. There is also a size mismatch of Bruton with Williamsburg.

The vicar is travelling to Williamsburg later this year. It was suggested to obtain some feedback from him when he returns, and consider this topic further.

**25/053: 'Press Pack' of Bruton.**

To consider the requirement of a 'press pack' of Bruton (predominantly images), to be collated and made available on the town council website. If agreed, to discuss the next steps.

This has arisen from two recent requests for access to freely available photos, that cover key parts of Bruton, and can be freely downloaded. Cllr Anderton has taken some photos, which can be made freely available on the town council website. It would be useful to update the description of the town on the website as well.

**25/054: Request for permission to trim an area of riverbank at Church Bridge.**

To consider a request for permission received from BrewCREW to trim the riverbank near to Church Bridge, to permit safer access for clearance of Himalayan Balsam.

The removed Himalayan Balsam will be 'hot composted' (disposed of responsibly).

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to grant permission (retrospectively) for BrewCREW to trim the riverbank near to Church Bridge, as requested. To delegate to the town clerk to make decisions of this nature for future times.**

**25/055: Bank Reconciliations.**

- a. To approve the [bank reconciliations](#) for the current and deposit accounts and credit card for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to approve the bank reconciliations for the accounts and period as listed.**

- b. To note that Cllr Crawford has attended the Community Office on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 to review the bank reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**Noted.**

**25/056: Accounts for Payment.**

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

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to approve the payments list for July 2025 as circulated and published.**

- b. To note that funds totalling £15,000 have been transferred from the CCLA account to the town council current account to cover July payments.

**Noted.**

- c. Schedule of payments for August 2025. To delegate to the clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to agree the payments in August 2025, that are to meet contractual obligations, that are within budget limits or those payments that are for services and orders agreed by Full Council or Committees at previous meetings. The list of payments made will be presented to Full Council at the September Full Council meeting.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to delegate to the clerk, chair and vice chair to agree the payments for August 2025, as detailed above.**

**25/057: Additional hours payments for officers.**

- a. To agree payment for additional hours worked by officers.

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to agree payment for the additional hours worked (5.75hours) by the Deputy Clerk.**

- b. To delegate to the clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to agree up to 10 hours of additional hours worked within a three month period (currently there is a review of staffing hours worked each quarter).

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to delegate to the clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, to agree up to 10 hours of additional hours worked within each quarter year.**

**25/058: Reports - to receive reports from:**

- a. Members representing the Council on outside bodies.

Cllr Jones reported that the Local Community Network AGM took place on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The co-chairs are now Tim Carty (Milborne Port PC) and Judi Morrison (Castle Cary TC). Cllr Jones is happy to attend the meetings as the Bruton representative.

Cllr Crawford reported that the museum are holding a festival, towards the end of October, which will be on for a few weeks.

Cllr Anderton reported that the Library Trust are renewing their contract with Somerset Council which will be extended to 2033.

Cllr Baker reported that ground work will be taking place on the playing fields at Jubilee Park which will include sanding and seeding, drilling, and the spraying of seaweed based fertilizer.
- b. Town Councillors.

Cllr Hood reported that the Somerset Council Rights of Way Officer is now Daniel Gordon. The woods with significant tree felling has now re-opened. Positive reports have been received from residents regarding the speed indicator device recently located at Plox (new location).

Cllr Crawford reported that complaints have been received regarding dogs on the green area at Lower Backway, and could there be a dog friendly area implemented?
- c. Chair.

Cllr Buckland reported that he is meeting with the High Sheriff of Somerset in early August, and welcomed any input from councillors. The High Sheriff is very keen on supporting young people.

Some residents in Lower Backway attendance the Town Committee meeting regarding anti- social behaviour. They also contacted Cllr Buckland directly afterwards to confirm exactly what action is being taken. Cllr Buckland is to liaise with youth workers, PCSO, schools and some young people, to try to work out a way forward. The anti-social behaviour

experienced was clarified, and that it is important to be in contact with all education providers in the town.

**25/059: Date of the next meeting of the Full Council:** The next full council meeting is Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025, 7.30pm at the Community Hall. Agenda items to the clerk by 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

**25/060: 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 25/061 is commercially sensitive.**

**It was RESOLVED [11-0-0] to exclude the press and public for agenda item 25/061 County Fields on the grounds that it is commercially sensitive.**

**The confidential part of the meeting opened: 8.54pm.**

**25/061: County Fields**

To receive a short report from the clerk overviewing a recent meeting with Somerset Council surveyor about the area referred to locally as 'County Fields'. To discuss the key points, and to decide upon next steps.

The clerk overviewed the meeting with the county surveyor last week. One question was whether the top end of the footpath could be altered to avoid an area of land owned by Somerset Council that is likely to be included in the land supply for affordable housing. This is to be investigated further.

The land has not been grazed this year. The trees planted by Somerset Council (as phosphate mitigation) have not been looked after, and are not looking healthy.

It was suggested that Cllrs Hood, Robinson, Jones and Anderton support the clerk with engaging with the officer, to attend meetings, and to bring recommendations forward to councillors for discussion.

**Meeting closed: 9.09pm.**

**END OF MINUTES**