

**Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the FULL COUNCIL held in Bruton  
Community Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

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

**In the chair: Cllr Buckland**

**Officers present: Deputy Clerk**

**Members of the public: 11, including representatives of The Prickly Pear  
Public House.**

Before opening the formal Council meeting the Chair explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consider a response to the local Licensing Authority's notification of an application by The Prickly Pear public house to vary its premises licence. This was the only item on the agenda; other matters like the existing premises licence and the operation of the public house were not under consideration.

Representatives of The Prickly Pear were invited to address the meeting if they wished, but they indicated that they were content to listen to the proceedings and answer any questions that might be asked.

Members of the public were also given the opportunity to speak, and among the points made were the following:

- The premises licence should provide for the outside areas to be closed after 10pm so that occupants of nearby properties could sleep with their windows open without being disturbed by the sounds of late night revelry;
- This provision should apply especially to the side garden because it had been raised almost to first floor height which placed it directly adjacent to and opposite the bedrooms of neighbouring properties. Its unrestricted use late at night could cause a serious nuisance, and the installation of a retractable roof structure to enable all-weather operation meant that this could become a frequent occurrence;
- It is unacceptable for live or recorded music to be played so loudly that the bass notes (especially) penetrate to the heart of neighbouring properties, even with all intermediate doors and windows closed. The operation of a public house does not override the neighbours' rights to the quiet enjoyment of their own homes;
- During opening hours The Prickly Pear should keep its doors and windows closed, if necessary using air conditioning to keep the premises cool, so that the

noise generated is confined to the premises and does not blight the lives of occupants of neighbouring properties;

- The management should take steps to discourage patrons from indulging in noisy or anti-social behaviour in the street outside the pub after closing time. This did not happen often under previous management regimes, but after the pub changed hands it became increasingly common. Behaviour that makes it impossible for neighbours to enjoy the peace and quiet of their own homes, especially at night should not be tolerated;
- 11pm should be quite late enough for last orders in a small market town like Bruton.

After members of the public had finished making their points the Chair opened the formal Council meeting.

**25/062: Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).**

Cllr Coulter sent her apologies for being unable to attend.

**25/063: 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

**25/064: Notification of application for the variation of a premises license.**

To consider the notification for the variation for premises license number 024379 (Castle Inn (also known as the Prickly Pear), 45 High St, Bruton), and make representations to the Licensing Authority, Somerset Council.

- It was noted that the points made by members of the public were mainly concerned with the way the Prickly Pear had operated in the past, and the effect it would have on their lives if it continued to operate in the same way when it reopened. Councillors understand and have great sympathy for these public concerns, but as had been explained earlier, the only item on the agenda of this meeting was the consideration of a response to the proposed variation of the premises licence;
- The Licensing Authority had stated in clear, explicit and unambiguous terms that in making its decision it would only consider representations which are directly relevant to the proposed changes, and that objections to activities or timings permitted under the existing licence would not be considered;
- It is evident that since the change of ownership there has been a breakdown of trust between the new management on the one hand, and neighbours and

some members of the community on the other. It is clearly in the interest of all parties for that trust to be rebuilt;

- If the new or reconstituted business is operated in a professional manner, with sensible operating procedures and well-trained and properly supervised staff, it should be able to improve its relations with neighbours and repair the breakdown of trust;
- It is clear that the licensees intend to operate a different kind of business to what existed before the pub was closed for alteration and refurbishment, notably in the provision of extensive dining facilities, so it would be a mistake to assume that when it reopens the pub would continue to be run in the same way as previously;
- There is a nearby licensed premises whose licence starts at 8am, and no one appears to object to this early opening, so it would be difficult to make a case for opposing a start time of 10am for The Prickly Pear;
- Many local people including councillors are grateful to the new owners for investing so much time, energy, care and money into the refurbishment of the Listed building and the development of the business. They are very much looking forward to the reopening of The Prickly Pear and they wish it well;
- Nonetheless, if it comes to pass that the pub is operated in a way that causes a nuisance, or that breaches the licensing conditions, then anyone affected can and should report it to the relevant enforcement authorities, namely the Police, the Environmental Health Department of Somerset Council, and the Licensing Authority.

**It was RESOLVED 10-0-2 [For-against-abstain] that Bruton Town Council supports the variation of the premises licence, and further that these draft minutes (of the Full Council meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> August) be submitted to the Licensing Authority, in the hope that the background and contextual information herein will help inform the Authority's decision-making process.**

**25/065: 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.

**The meeting finished at 7.53pm**

**End of minutes**