

**Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee ‘FUTURE BRUTON’ meeting,
Tuesday 21st October 2025, Bruton Community Hall**

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

In the Chair: Cllr Robinson

Officers present: Deputy Clerk.

Minutes

SP25/11: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Apologies were received from Brian Mullis

SP25/12: 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.

SP25/13: Minutes from the last meeting.

To agree the minutes from the last meeting, on 15th July 2025, as a true and accurate record.

It was RESOLVED 8-0-0 [For-against-abstain] to accept the minutes of the meeting on 15th July 2025 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

SP25/14: Election of Vice Chair

It was RESOLVED 8-0-0 that Cllr. Bateman be elected Vice Chair

SP25/15: Bruton Town Plan.

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

Cllr. Jones reported that the preparation of the Town Plan questionnaire is slightly behind schedule. The draft questionnaire is still in note form and not quite ready, but it will be submitted to the Town Council (BTC) for approval at the November Full Council meeting. The intention is to launch the Town Plan consultation in the Spring.

SP25/16: Strategic Plan: Appearance of the Town

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

A comprehensive written report by the Town Clerk on the possible appointment of a Town Ranger was reviewed and the following points were made:

- Residents are always pleased to see work being done to improve the appearance of the town, especially when it extends to outlying areas and is not just confined to the town centre.
- If the Town Ranger role were to prove successful, the workload and requisite budget would be likely to increase year on year, initially at least, as more opportunities for useful intervention become apparent.
- The relationship between the Ranger and the Grounds Maintenance Team would be crucially important, with both looking out for each other in identifying tasks and areas where intervention might prove beneficial.
- An effective Town Ranger would be proactive and flexible in approach and quick to act and react.
- The success of the role would depend on effective communications and liaison between the Ranger, the Grounds Maintenance Team, Council officers and volunteer groups like One Planet Bruton's Hoedown. Managing this would involve extra work for Council officers.
- Through the good offices of Good Company Bruton a contractor is currently spending 4-5 hours a week clearing weeds around the town, until the end of March, and this could help the Council identify effective approaches.
- The administrative, compliance and other costs associated with the direct employment of a Town Ranger would be substantial. It seems likely that commissioning the services of a well-qualified, well-equipped, responsible and responsive independent contractor would represent better value for money for BTC, Council taxpayers and other residents.

It was RESOLVED 8-0-0 to fill the role of Town Ranger by seeking the services of an independent contractor.

SP25/17: Strategic Plan: Safe and Active Travel (walking and cycling)

To receive any updates regarding 'County Fields' and consider any further steps.

Cllr.Hood reported that an officer from Somerset Council (SC) had taken the initiative of contacting the BTC about progress, which is an encouraging sign. It was noted that the recently planted trees in County Fields were not doing particularly well, and that this should be borne in mind if there were any question of BTC being asked to take on responsibility for their maintenance. The owner of a neighbouring field is aware of the proposed footpath project and might be able to help if there are access problems. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would continue to press SC to advance the project, and would also try to estimate what legal costs might be incurred.

SP25/18: Flood/Resilience Action Plan.

Members agreed that it was important to identify who would take 'the Action Plan forward. Adapting the Somerset Ten Point plan template to fit Bruton's circumstances would be no small task, and would involve extra officer time; Cllr. Jones agreed to liaise with Cllr. Dunn and the Assistant Clerk to see how this could best be managed. It was noted that surface water run-off now possibly poses a greater flooding danger than the River Brue.

SP25/19: Funding larger projects within the parish boundary.

It was noted that borrowing money from the Public Loans Board is a comparatively straightforward process, but obtaining permission to borrow is considerably more complicated. It involves preparing a cast-iron business case and supplying evidence of extensive consultation and community support, whether or not repaying the loan might require an increase in the parish precept.

Councillors agreed on the importance of establishing a framework for major project funding applications, and also that a list of possible future projects should be included in the Parish Plan consultation questionnaire in order to help establish priorities. These might include (in no particular order) County Fields, the BruBowl project (if additional funding is required), Jubilee Park Play equipment, and the possible acquisition of assets such like the SC car parks, Riverside walk, and even Dovecote House (the building housing the Community and Town Council offices).

It was pointed out that all this would involve a considerable amount of officer time.

SP25/20: Date of next meeting. Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 7.30pm (to be confirmed), to be held in the Community Hall.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm